

# Men's League for Women's Suffrage

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## THE SITUATION.

OUR cause now marches from victory to victory. May brought the second reading of the Conciliation Bill and the triumphant majority of 167. Just at the end of the month (May 29th) Mr. Lloyd George announced that the Government would allot a week for its further stages next session. It was something, but as the time was limited to a week without the closure, it was not nearly enough, and no sane Suffrage Society would put faith in such an offer. On June 1st, however, Sir Edward Grey, speaking at the National Liberal Club, the very citadel of official and party Liberalism, promised in the Government's name that if at the end of a week a "combined, determined majority, substantial and united," wished to proceed with the Bill, the Government would not intervene, and also that the supporters of the Bill should have a fair chance of defending themselves against destruction "by the means which the rules of the House placed at the disposal of a majority."

Coming from a true-hearted advocate and an honourable statesman that promise took us very much further. The only weak point was the description of the necessary majority. In the midst of wrecking and adultist amendments, introduced by false friends and supported by the cunning of our enemies, who could decide what majority should be called "combined, determined, substantial, and united"? As chairman of the Conciliation Committee, Lord Lytton wrote to Mr. Asquith, demanding still more definite assurances.

The Prime Minister's reply was received on the afternoon of June 16th. It is a letter of such importance that we reprint it in full on another page. Mr. Asquith referred Lord Lytton to Sir Edward Grey's statement as "accurately expressing the intentions of the Government." He went on to say that the week promised for the Bill next Session would be interpreted with reasonable elasticity, that the Government would interpose no obstacle to the proper use of the closure, and that if the Bill gets through Committee in the time proposed (*i.e.* in the elastic week) the extra days required for report and third reading would not be refused. Finally, he added that the Government are unanimous in their determination to give effect, "not only in the letter, but in the spirit," to the promise of facilities he himself made before last General Election.

No Government pledge could be more explicit or complete. It marks by far the furthest point in our advance hitherto. As *The Nation* said in a leading article, from the moment when the Prime Minister signed this frank and ungrudging letter women became, in all but the legal formality, voters and citizens. The change found expression in the air of triumph pervading the enormous procession that passed from the Embankment to the Albert Hall on June 17th, a few hours after the publication of

the letter. Never in political history has such a procession been witnessed—so vast, so united in purpose, so determined to sacrifice all for victory, and so radiant with hope. Our League was given one of the posts of honour as guarding the rear, and, wearisome though the hours of waiting were for men as well as for women, both at the start and at intervals along the route, there is not one of us who is not proud to have taken part in such a demonstration.

In consequence of Mr. Asquith's pledge, the Executive Committee of the League, at a meeting held on June 27th, resolved to recommend the League, not to reverse, but to suspend the anti-Government policy recently pursued by the League at elections. While keeping the attack upon all Government candidates as a weapon in reserve, in case our trust in the Prime Minister's pledge should be falsified, the Committee is unanimously of opinion that the time has now come when the League may safely support such candidates as pledge themselves wholeheartedly to further the Conciliation Committee's Bill, no matter to what party they belong.

In order to lay this recommendation before members of the League, the Executive have, therefore, summoned a General Meeting at the Holborn Restaurant, on Friday, July 21st, at 8 o'clock, when Lord Lytton will address us.

We have also the greatest pleasure in announcing that Lord Lytton has most kindly accepted the office of President of our League during the ensuing year.

There are few men, indeed, who have laboured so zealously and so effectively for the cause, and we confidently call upon all our members who can possibly attend to support him at the first meeting of his Presidency.

But in the midst of all our triumph and confident hope we must not forget that the final victory has yet to be won. No effort can yet be relaxed. At least a year of the most strenuous activity still lies before us. We must devote all our energy to carrying the knowledge and purpose of our cause far and wide throughout the country. At last the flowing tide is with us, but we must not trust to the tide alone. On their own ground the "Antis" are defeated. If they stood alone they would be negligible. But they trust, with only too good reason, to the tactics of the traitors who still find shelter in our camp, and to the pedantry of the doctrinaires whose eyes are fixed on some abstract world very different from our own. In combination, the enemy, the traitors, and the cross-grained adultists make up a very powerful alliance. Their avowed purpose may not be the same, but their action leads only to one result—the indefinite and intolerable postponement of woman's enfranchisement. It is against this unholy alliance that all our efforts must now be directed.

We call on our members, in the first place, to speak at all possible meetings; and, in the second, to join their local political associations and to insist that our question should be openly and fairly treated. Even where the sitting Member of Parliament does not belong to their own party, they can often exert enough influence to induce his association to receive deputations, to hold special meetings, and to invite prominent speakers to explain the scope of our Bill and the wider purposes of the whole movement. We are convinced that by such means our cause can best be served at the present moment.

We heartily congratulate Brighton on having replaced the Hon. W. Fitz-Uryan Rice, an anti-Suffragist, by the Hon. John Edward Gordon, an avowed Suffragist. Mr. Gordon, in a letter sent to J. Edward Francis, the Hon. Sec. of the Sussex Men's League, a few days before his election, uses the following words: "I intend to vote for Sir G. Kemp's Bill, the object of which has my complete approval." Brighton being the first bye-election after Mr. Asquith's pledge, the Sussex Men's League had determined to contest the seat, and had more than one member pledged to stand if the candidate had been an "anti."

With the greatest regret we have to announce that, owing to his official position, Mr. Cecil Chapman has felt compelled to resign the chairmanship of our Executive. He remains, however, one of the truest friends of the League, and one of the most effectual supporters of the movement.

At a meeting on June 27th Mr. Herbert Jacobs, the founder of the League and our former Chairman, was unanimously elected to succeed him. H. W. N.

### THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGE. TEXT OF MR. ASQUITH'S LETTER.

June 16, 1911.

MY DEAR LYTTON,—In reply to your letter on the subject of facilities for the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, I would refer you to some observations recently made in a speech at the National Liberal Club by Sir Edward Grey which accurately express the intentions of the Government.

It follows (to answer your specific inquiries) that "the week" offered will be interpreted with reasonable elasticity, that the Government will interpose no obstacle to a proper use of the closure, and that if (as you suggest) the Bill gets through Committee in the time proposed, the extra days required for report and third reading would not be refused.

The Government, though divided in opinion on the merits of the Bill, are unanimous in their determination to give effect not only in the letter but in the spirit to the promise in regard to facilities which I made on their behalf before the last General Election.

Yours, &c.,  
H. H. ASQUITH.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

At an Executive meeting on June 27th it was resolved "That this League will devote its efforts during the coming year to such support of the Conciliation Committee as will ensure the successful passage of the Bill, and in particular will oppose all candidates for Parliament who will not pledge themselves to give it their support." Proposed by H. N. Brailsford, seconded by J. Y. Kennedy.

Also that: "That the Government, having promised facilities for Women's Suffrage during next Session, the policy directed by the Resolution dated December 23rd, 1910, be suspended unless the Committee for special reasons think it advisable to recur to it." Proposed by Dr. Boulting, seconded by Mr. Cholmely, and referred unanimously to a General Meeting of the League as a recommendation. This General Meeting is to be held at the Holborn Restaurant on July 21st at 8. P.M.

Also that no voting papers be sent to members unless by special request.

### THE GREAT PROCESSION.

No one who was present in the ranks of the Great Procession could fail to recognize on the one hand that it was a triumphal march, and on the other that the massed spectators recognized it as such. Those of us whose memories go back to the famous "mud march" on that dismal Saturday in 1906 saw the remarkable change of atmosphere which five years has effected in the attitude of Londoners. Then the Suffragist was an untried curiosity. Now she and her leaders are recognized public characters. The average Londoner is not really a keen politician, and it may be that while he passively approves their cause, his real friendship is for its leaders. It may be so, but none the less he sees in those leaders women who, in a wonderfully short time, have fortified for themselves an inextinguishable place in the life of the nation.

We in the men's societies, which brought up the rear of the procession, naturally saw less of the procession than any one else, and it was not till after 7 o'clock that we moved from our appointed station. By a happy arrangement the Men's League, the Men's Political Union, and the Men's Committee for Justice were massed together, the two younger societies in front and rear respectively, the Men's League in the centre.

Our own members were far larger than on any previous occasion. The League banner was carried by Mr. Laurence Housman (its designer) and Mr. J. M. Mitchell; Mr. Herbert Jacobs and Mr. Joseph Clayton preceded, carrying the guide strings, while the remainder of the Committee followed close behind it. Among other marchers we were glad to see Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. Israel Zangwill, Mr. A. J. Webbe, Mr. Ward Higgs, and many other tried friends of the cause. In addition to five minor banners of the League we had in our ranks the banners of the Bournemouth, Liverpool, and Manchester Branches, while the Sussex League and the Cambridge University Branch sent special contingents. Strictly speaking the Cambridge Branch should have marched with the University Graduates, but we gladly welcomed the trifling disobedience to the programme which led them to prefer to march with the League. The Cambridge banner was carried by its founder, Mr. E. O. Vulliamy (of King's College), and all its members wore academical robes.

Though the crowds had been watching for a good two hours along the route, its friendly interest had by no means evaporated by the time the Men's contingents passed. It is true that now and again we came in for badinage, more or less genial, but there was no rancour in the jesting such as we experienced in early days, and we missed some of the hoary jibes with which once we were familiar. No pennies even were thrown to us by the clubs as we passed. On the other hand we received the warmest greetings not only from women, but also from men along the route. As we came through St. James's Street the League raised hearty and prolonged applause in honour of Mrs. Wolstenholme-Elmy, who watched the demonstration from No. 67A.

But perhaps the greatest event in the whole march from the standpoint of the Men's contingent came at the moment when we passed the Lyceum Club. Despite their long session, the numerous Suffragists who belong to this club were still lining the balconies when the Men's societies reached Piccadilly, and their enthusiastic greeting was warmly reciprocated by full-throated cheers from the Men's League.

At length, at approximately 9 o'clock, we reached the vicinity of the Albert Hall. Here the whole breadth of the wide road was one bewildering mass of Suffrage colours carried by those who, not having a ticket for the Hall—already overcrowded—had turned to watch the end of the procession. It does not detract from the sincerity of the applause which greeted King George and Queen Mary when they stepped upon the balconies of Buckingham Palace on the ensuing Thursday to say that the men and the women lining the street on this occasion expressed a loyalty and a conviction of approaching triumph which nothing could exceed.

Some of our members proceeded to seats in the Albert Hall where they found the famous leaders of the Social and Political Union in a vein of triumph which not even the coldest cynic could reasonably criticize. Others sought the smaller but equally crammed meeting of the Women's Freedom League at the

Kensington Town Hall, where not only the leaders of the Women's Freedom League spoke, but also Mrs. Roper of the Lancashire and Cheshire Women's Textile Association, on behalf of the tens of thousands of Lancashire working women who had marched in the procession.

Others again made their way to the Portman Rooms, in which the great contingent of the National Union of Woman Suffrage Societies held their concluding demonstration.

It is true that we saw comparatively little of the greatest march that has ever been made by peaceful citizens through the Empire's capital. But those who marched will never forget having been there, for by the faces of the crowds that lined the route they recognized that there the question of women's suffrage has at last gone beyond the power of cabinets to refuse it an answer. The mass of the people are convinced, and, that being so, Mr. Asquith may ply his mop, but the tide will swamp him—and that quickly. J. M. M.

### THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE. THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN SUFFRAGE ALLIANCE.

It is impossible to find strong enough words of appreciation for the organization of this Congress, and for the hospitality of the Swedish Women's Suffrage Association. The business and social functions of the Congress were carried out with a finish excellent that of any other gathering I have yet attended; and one could not help feeling that the last remnant of opposition to Woman's Suffrage would be swept away if its opponents could have heard and witnessed its proceedings. It is in Congresses of this kind that large international issues are raised, and those who imagine that women are incapable of working in concert would have been brought to shame if they had heard the discussions in the Congress, where women of all nationalities and opinions united in contributing their share to forwarding the common cause in every country, great or small. At present there is no movement on the face of the earth which shows a fraction of the unanimity and solidarity of the Women's Suffrage movement; and no one who fails to recognize its overwhelming power, and the importance of employing it in the councils of the State, is worthy of the name of statesman.

As general accounts of the Congress will doubtless appear in the women's papers, it will be well to refer chiefly to the men's share in the Congress, more especially as it has been an extremely pleasant one. Whereas at Amsterdam three years ago the men's interest in the cause was represented by one solitary member of our League, and in London by the English and Dutch Men's Leagues, the first meeting at Stockholm revealed the fact that there were eight men representatives from six countries: Dr. Bather and myself for the English Men's Committee for Justice to Women and Men's League; Mynheer F. W. Kehrer and Lieut.-Col. W. A. Mansfeldt of the Dutch Men's League; M. J. du Breuil de St. Germain of the French Ligue d'Electeurs pour le Suffrage des Femmes; Herr Franz Lehnhoff of Germany; Dr. A. Pataj of the Hungarian Men's League; and Mr. F. Nathan of the New York City Men's League. At a meeting in the Royal Academy of Music on Monday afternoon Mr. Ernst Beckman, of the Swedish Upper House and President of the National Swedish Liberal Federation, also spoke on behalf of the cause.

On Tuesday morning the eight men representatives met together at the Grand Hotel, and at the instance of Dr. Pataj decided to form a Men's International Alliance for Women Suffrage, to which men's organizations for Women's Suffrage should be invited to affiliate. Lieut.-Col. Mansfeldt was appointed first secretary, and Mr. F. W. Kehrer second secretary, but afterwards treasurer. It was also decided to arrange a meeting in Stockholm if possible with the object of starting a Swedish Men's League. This project was most cordially received by Mrs. Chapman Catt and the Swedish Association, and resulted in the holding of a most successful meeting in the banquet hall of the Grand Hotel on the Thursday afternoon, at which Mr. Beckman presided. Addresses were given by all the men delegates, and a strong and influential Swedish Men's League was formed at the close, with Mr. Beckman as provisional Presi-

dent. It is expected that two other leagues in Denmark and Germany will be formed as a result of this meeting.

Our greetings as fraternal delegates were presented to the Alliance on Friday afternoon. The message from our League was as follows: "The British Men's League for Women's Suffrage sends its heartiest greetings to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance at Stockholm, and congratulations at the progress of the Woman Suffrage in various countries, and expresses the hope that before the next meeting of the Alliance the men of Great Britain will have done their duty in granting a measure of justice to women. It also sends greetings to the Men's Leagues which have been formed in other countries, and best wishes for their success in helping this great movement." A brief sketch of the work of the League and of the Conciliation Committee followed, and at the close I was empowered to bring back the greetings of the Alliance to the Men's League, and especially to Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Brailsford for their efforts in the cause. Dr. Bather's address was also enthusiastically received, and a tribute must be paid to his valuable work throughout the Congress, due to his zeal and knowledge of the Swedish language.

Of the remainder of the Congress it can only be said here that the reports from enfranchised countries strongly confirmed the expectations of supporters of the cause, especially as regards the economic question. The importance of keeping the Suffrage cause free from party was reaffirmed by a unanimous vote. C. V. D.

### NOTICE.

The National Federation of Women Workers will hold a grand demonstration on Women and the Insurance Bill in Trafalgar Square on Saturday, July 15th, at 4.30 P.M. Chairmen: Miss Mary Macarthur (President of the Federation), Miss K. M. Mollison, M.A. (Organizing Secretary of the Federation), Dr. Marion Phillips (Organizing Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League). Speakers: George Barnes, M.P.; George Lansbury, M.P.; Mrs. Lamont (Vice-President of the Federation); Miss Margaret Bondfield (Organizer Women's Labour League); Mr. J. J. Mallon (Secretary, Anti-Sweating League); Mr. W. C. Anderson (Chairman I.L.P.), and others.

### MEETINGS ADDRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE M.L.W.S.

JUNE 3.	Peckham Rye, W.F.L.	J. M. Mitchell.
" 4.	Hyde Park, M.L.	T. Gugenheim, J. Simpson, and A. Mackinlay.
" 7.	Woolwich, W.S.P.U.	E. G. Clayton.
" 8.	Southampton, N.U.W.S.S.	Laurence Housman.
" 8.	Ealing, W.S.P.U.	J. Y. Kennedy.
" 10.	40, Holland Park, W.S.P.U.	Laurence Housman.
" 10.	Richmond W.S.P.U.	E. G. Clayton.
" 11.	Kensington, Catholic, W.S.S.	Joseph Clayton.
" 11.	Hampstead Heath, W.S.P.U.	Henry W. Nevinson.
" 11.	Ealing, W.S.P.U.	J. Y. Kennedy.
" 11.	Hyde Park, W.F.L.	Reginald H. Pott.
" 11.	Catford, W.S.P.U.	Reginald H. Pott.
" 11.	Kew Green, W.S.P.U.	E. G. Clayton.
" 11.	Hyde Park, M.L.	T. Gugenheim, J. Simpson.
" 11.	Finsbury Park	A. Mackinlay.
" 14.	Notting Hill, W.S.P.U.	Reginald H. Pott.
" 15.	Camberwell, N.U.W.S.S.	J. Y. Kennedy.
" 15.	Kensington, W.S.P.U.	Joseph Clayton.
" 15.	Kensington, W.S.P.U.	Reginald H. Pott.
" 15.	Worthing, N.U.W.S.S.	Laurence Housman.
" 16.	Muswell Hill, N.U.W.S.S.	J. Arthur Price, Organizer.
" 18.	Hyde Park, M.L.	Laurence Housman and T. Gugenheim.
" 19.	Hyde Park, Tax Resistance League.	Joseph Clayton.
" 20.	Tottenham, W.F.L.	Reginald H. Pott.
" 24.	Ilford, W.S.P.U.	Reginald H. Pott.
" 25.	Hyde Park, M.L.	T. Gugenheim and J. Simpson.
" 27.	I.W.F. Club.	Laurence Housman.
" 30.	Braunton, M.L.	J. M. Mitchell.

### OPEN-AIR CAMPAIGN.

WILL all members who addressed open-air meetings, or are likely to address some this month, please send in names and places of meetings to the office on a post card.

