

THE VOTE,
OCTOBER 27, 1916.
ONE PENNY.

OUR Mission.

C. DESPARD.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XIV. No. 366.

(Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper and transmissible through the post in the United Kingdom at the newspaper rate of postage, but to Canada and Newfoundland at the Magazine rate.)

FRIDAY, OCT. 27, 1916.

Edited by C. DESPARD.

OBJECTS: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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NOT OVERBOARD BUT ABOARD!

Last Friday evening the following resolution was carried unanimously at a meeting held by the Women's Freedom League at Caxton Hall:—

That this meeting demand that the Government give its immediate attention to the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men, in order that women may be on the voters' register at the next General Election.

From the chair Miss Eunice Murray said that although the country might be with us in our demand for political enfranchisement, yet it rested with women themselves to see that the country helped us to get it. Every woman must be very watchful and make it clear to men that they wanted deeds in the form of just awards for services rendered and not merely lavish words of praise.

In proposing the resolution, Mrs. Tanner said that the present time was opportune for woman suffrage, the iron was hot now, and women must see that it did not get cold. Women had rendered magnificent services to their country, but we must not forget that women themselves had made it possible for these services to be rendered; that many of those who are loudest in the praise of women to-day would, had it been possible, have prevented women from fitting themselves for the work they had undertaken and carried through. Much more could

have been done by women had not men's prejudices stood in their way. If women had had equal power with men in the State they would not have allowed food prices to run up to their present figure, nor huge fortunes to have been made by profiteers out of the nation's need.

In seconding the resolution, the Rev. W. Major Scott stated that he was not a recent convert to woman suffrage, that one of the first public meetings he remembered attending had been in support of women's political enfranchisement, and that when we were "sick and in prison" he "had visited" us! He considered that the essential thing in our campaign was the breaking down of the sex barrier. Women needed the vote now to have some control over the conditions of their labour, and they would need it after the war to express their opinions on changed conditions, but they could only express their opinions effectively if they had the power of the vote behind them. Mr. Scott was not very sanguine about the results of the Electoral Reform Conference; but one thing was certain, there would be a great awakening of bitterness if the women's movement were again side-tracked. He was not out to praise women; politicians had done that most offensively, and he thought women had the right to

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say to them: "We have borne your blame, at least spare us your praise!" He himself thought that women had something to learn in sportsmanlike conduct. Many men still clung to the oriental view about women, and the Churches had been to blame in fostering it. St. Paul had been misquoted and misinterpreted in its support, as though his views on this subject could be binding on people in the twentieth century. The great majority of people nowadays were persuaded of the justice of women's demand for political power. We must rid our minds of the notion that the vote was given as a boon, and fight for it because it was just that women as well as men should have it. Mr. Scott expressed his hearty assent to the resolution, and urged those present to remember that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

Mrs. Despard maintained that the stand which the Women's Freedom League had taken since war was declared justified our existence; women's claim for political liberty was stronger now and the interest in it deeper than ever before. With regard to the Conference, she said that politicians would find themselves on the horns of a dilemma if they attempted to deal with the franchise without considering the claims of women.

Mrs. Whetton (of Portsmouth), who also supported the resolution, said that Lord Charles Beresford had expressed himself in favour of votes for women, but he had refrained from voting for the Conciliation Bill because he thought it might be the thin end of the wedge of adult suffrage! It was Lord Charles Beresford, however, who had first suggested that votes should be given to soldiers and sailors, but so far as Portsmouth was concerned it would have been as well if he had suggested that votes should be given to the widows of soldiers and sailors, for there were 1,500 widows in the town after the battle of Jutland. The Women's Freedom League had a good deal to be proud of. In the early days of the war we had offered to take over the cooking in a camp to show the authorities how it would be done by women accustomed to this work. The offer was, of course, rejected, but more recently the Government had accepted other similar offers, and the experiments had proved highly satisfactory. The Women's Freedom League had been the first to get women police in the streets of London, and now there were more than forty paid policewomen. Indeed, it might be said that "What the Women's Freedom League suggest to-day the country will adopt to-morrow." Mrs. Whetton urged her fellow-members not to be weary in well-doing; we must not get tired but should be ever on the alert and always watchful of events lest the history of 1884 should repeat itself. Women were then thrown overboard to save the sinking ship; this time we must all be aboard!

Supper Party to Miss Nina Boyle.

Miss Boyle's plans for temporary absence from England with a hospital unit are practically completed, and she expects to leave shortly. To afford her many friends an opportunity of speeding her on her way a supper-party will be given at "The Despard Arms," 123, Hampstead-road, on Saturday, November 4, at 7 p.m. Mrs. Despard will preside. Tickets, 2s. each, may be obtained from Headquarters, 144, High Holborn. The nearest stations to "The Despard Arms" are Warren-street (Hampstead and Highgate Tube) and Euston-square (Metropolitan). Motor-buses, Nos. 24, 27, and 29, pass the door; Nos. 1, 14, and 65 pass the end of Tottenham Court-road (less than five minutes' walk).

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.



DARE TO BE FREE.

Miss Franklin. Tea 4.30 (6d.). Admission free. LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m., followed by ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 6.30.

Friday, November 3.—SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEETING, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 9.45 a.m. CROYDON SEWING MEETING, 9, Morland-avenue, 3 p.m.

Sunday, November 5.—RECITAL of "Fairy Tales—Old and New" by Miss Raleigh, and Folk Songs by Miss Anne Squire, at the Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C., 4 p.m. Tea served at 3.15—3.50 (6d.) Tickets 1s. and 6d., from W.F.L. Office.

Wednesday, November 8.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Margaret Hodge, "How Anti-Suffragists are made in our Nurseries." Chair: Miss F. A. Underwood. CLAPHAM BRANCH MEETING, 15, Clapham-mansions, Nightingale-lane, S.W., 7 p.m.

Thursday, November 9 (Full Moon).—LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL DISCUSSION MEETING, to be opened by Mr. W. L. George, on "War and the Change in Woman's Nature," at the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 8 p.m. Chair: Mrs. Mustard. Tickets 1s. and 6d. (no collection).

Wednesday, November 15.—"AT HOME," Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: The Rev. Hugh Chapman, "Woman the Liberator," and Mrs. Mustard. Chair: Mrs. Despard.

Friday, November 17.—PUBLIC MEETING at 32a, The Arcade, High-street, Croydon. Speaker: Miss Lakeman.

Saturday, November 18.—LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL, Jumble Sale, Tolmer's-square Institute, Drummond-street, Hampstead-road, N.W., 3 p.m.

Wednesday, November 22.—"AT HOME," Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Mr. Cameron Grant, on "The Fleishpots of Egypt," and others.

Friday and Saturday, November 24 and 25.—Green, White and Gold Fair, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m.—9.30 p.m. Admission 1/- After 5 p.m. 6d.

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PROVINCES.

Tuesday, October 31.—MIDDLESBROUGH. Sewing Party, Suffrage Club, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road, 3 p.m.

Thursday, November 2.—IPSWICH. Sewing Meeting, 22, Queen-street, 3 p.m.

SCOTLAND.

Saturday, November 4.—EDINBURGH. "At Home," Suffrage Shop, 90, Lothian-road, 3 p.m. Miss Eunice G. Murray. Tea 3-3.30 p.m.

AGAIN WE EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY with our good friend and courageous champion of Votes for Women, Mrs. Thomson Price, in the great sorrow which has come so soon after the loss of her husband. Her only brother has been killed at the Front—another of the brilliant young men who have laid down their lives for their country.

THEY SUPPORT US!

THE ELECTORAL REFORM CONFERENCE.

Continual Pressure.

At our meetings last week, on Wednesday afternoon and Friday evening, members of the audience were invited to sign letters to the Speaker as chairman of the Electoral Reform Conference and to Mr. Walter Long, President of the Local Government Board, emphasizing the urgency and necessity of including votes for women in the recommendations of the Conference to the House of Commons. There was a good response; stamped addressed envelopes were provided, the signatories paid for the stamps, and the letters were posted immediately after the meetings. This plan will be continued while the Conference is sitting, and all Branches of the Women's Freedom League and sympathisers are urged to follow suit; also to continue the practice of sending a telegram and a letter every Wednesday morning to the Chairman of the Conference expressing the same demand. The pressure for votes for women must be continual and the bombardment heavy.

The Conference is to hold its sittings every Wednesday and Thursday morning. If votes for women should be excluded from the recommendations of the Conference it is hardly likely that they will be included by the House of Commons. Therefore it behoves us to do everything that lies in our power to press forward the urgency and the popularity of our claim.

Lord Courtney on "The Most Hotly Contested Element."

Lord Courtney of Penwith, in a long article published in *The Times* (October 24), makes suggestions to the Electoral Reform Conference on various points including woman suffrage, the "service vote," proportional representation, and parliamentary boundaries. He urges very strongly a policy of compromise, otherwise "agreed" resolutions will be impossible.

"Its necessity will be apparent," he says, "as soon as we turn to the first head of the reference. This deals with the question of franchise, and the most hotly contested element of this section is the proposed enfranchisement of women. Some members of the conference desire to give the Parliamentary vote to all adult women, as they would to all adult men. Others, however, are conspicuous for their refusal to entertain any suggestion of giving a vote to any woman. It is plain, apart from any consideration of the relation of this subject to other terms of the reference, that any agreed resolution upon it must involve the abatement of the extreme demand on one side and of the absolute resistance on the other. There is large scope for intermediate proposals. . . . I am disposed to assume that present franchise modified by the admission of a married woman, as joint occupier with her husband, is the minimum with which supporters of women's suffrage would be content, and unless those who have hitherto opposed woman suffrage altogether are ready to concede so much there could be no chance of an agreed resolution upon this subject. There might, indeed, remain a claim to raise the age of women above twenty-one before they could be competent for the franchise, and it is possible that this might meet with no strenuous resistance on the part of the supporters of woman franchise, who might easily feel that a disparity of age could not be long maintained. Dropping the question of universal adult suffrage and allowing an experimental increase in the qualifying age of woman might be considered as a fair set-off against the admission of all women possessing existing qualifications and of married women as joint occupiers with their husbands."

Will Soldiers' Wives Vote?

It is understood, says *The Times* (Political Notes, October 24), that Ministers are carrying out Mr. Asquith's promise that they would give "serious and sympathetic" attention to the question of enabling soldiers and sailors to record their votes. They have, however, not yet come to a final decision. The proposal that men should actually record their votes at the Front seems to have been ruled out. Consideration is being given in Government circles to an alternative scheme of a novel and interesting character. It is, briefly, that soldiers and sailors on active service should be given the right to vote by proxy. In that event, a fighting man's vote would be recorded, in accordance with his wishes,

in his constituency at home by a person nominated by him—possibly his wife. This does not look an easy solution on the face of it, but it is believed that, with good will and fair dealing, the necessary machinery could be set up. Meanwhile, members interested in the question regard it as imperative that the Government should come to an early decision, as the Special Register Bill cannot be proceeded with until this matter of principle has been settled. Changes of the kind suggested would need a complementary Bill for the amendment of the Ballot Act. The importance of the matter can be judged from the estimate that the votes of at least 1,000,000 fighting men are in the balance.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Death of Munition Workers.

Mr. Brace, in answer to a question by Sir Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, said that in the case of one woman who died from T.N.T. poisoning the usual precautions had not been carried out through a misunderstanding as to her position. In the other case, the doctor, owing to pressure of work, had not been able to carry out the full periodical examination of workers. Both defects have now been remedied, and the question of T.N.T. poisoning is receiving the close attention of the Home Office and Ministry of Munitions. Further investigation and experiments with new methods and appliances are being made.

Sugar Supplies.

Questioned by Mr. Thomas and Mr. Joynson Hicks about the supply of sugar and restrictions by grocers on its purchase, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that stocks would be quickly exhausted if no limit were set, but that he would ask the Sugar Commission to decide on the amount a grocer can require a person to buy before supplying sugar. He recognised that 4s. pressed heavily upon the poor.

In Hyde Park.

We had a very fine meeting last Sunday afternoon. The crowd expected us, and speedily gathered round prepared to listen. In spite of a piercing wind, they stood for nearly two hours and showed the keenest interest and sympathy. Miss Anna Munro spoke of the objects and work of the Women's Freedom League. Miss Eunice Murray followed with a very enlightening and forceful address. Her allusion to personal experience in munition works, to the indignation among municipal, civil, and railway employees at the different treatment with regard to war bonus and other matters meted out to men and women was much appreciated by the audience. At the close, *THE VOTE* and Miss Murray's pamphlet, "Women: The New Discovery," were sold at the Park gates. We must be in the Park every Sunday. Eager listeners expect us!

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

Last Wednesday afternoon Mrs. Corner presided over the meeting at Caxton Hall, and Miss Eunice Murray made an excellent speech on the necessity of women safeguarding their own interests. Much praise had been lavished by politicians and by the Press on Women's work and capacities during the last two years, but this praise was often cheap, and was no guarantee that women would receive a just award for their services in the future. In Glasgow and in other places women had been taken on for unaccustomed work with the promise that they should have equal pay with men, but that promise had been broken, and women were receiving less pay and less bonuses than men. Promises given to women in the industrial world seemed to be of as little value as promises given to women by politicians. Women must therefore agitate against these injustices, and must leave no stone unturned until they have secured complete political equality with men, which was the only way to secure equality with them in other directions.

Unfortunately Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., who was to have spoken on "The Rights of the Soldier," mistook the hour of this meeting. A letter was received from him the next day apologising for this error, and since then he has promised the secretary to fulfil his engagement at the earliest opportunity that can be arranged. We shall all be pleased to hear Mr. Chancellor again, who has on more than one occasion advocated woman suffrage on the Women's Freedom League platform.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 1228.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, October 27th, 1916.

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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.

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OUR MISSION.

It is a day of testing and weeding out. For the unfit, the wasters, and the idlers there is no honour. All of us—individuals, groups, businesses, societies—are being called upon to justify our existence. It occurs to us to ask what is our justification? Is there any reason why we of the Women's Freedom League should hold ourselves together and ask our fellow-women everywhere to join us?

Let it be remembered that since the war began we have not changed our attitude. We claim now, as we claimed then, that the business of the State is our business. We feel, and we do not hesitate to proclaim our feeling, that our interest in it is deepened, our demand to take part in it is strengthened, by the unspeakable horror and misery of these two dark years.

We are told, on the other hand, that woman, at such critical times as these, should stand aside from politics. It is her duty to serve—to equip and feed and nurse the troops, to make munitions, to keep the ordinary work of the country going:—

Hers not to reason why,
Hers but to do and die.

Is that, or is ours, the sensible and patriotic position?

We shall not need to go far to find reasons for our conviction that ours is the right attitude. Looking back over the years, we can trace many of our sorrows to the fact that civilised nations have allowed this one-sided state of things to exist. The spirit of domination, practised at home, goes out on its inhuman work, made strong by indulgence, and we have trade competition, armament-building, international unrest, the clash of arms, and the wanton destruction of that which is dearest to woman, the life of her children. Surely even the hope of inaugurating a society wide enough and firm enough not to be betrayed by the war-fiend should, by its attraction, band us together, should stir us up to any sacrifice, so that the end we desire may be brought nearer.

But while our eyes are on the future they are not blind to the present. In the actual state of affairs to-day we find the strongest reasons for unflinching persistence in our demand. Parliament is in session again, and questions of deep importance are engaging its attention. Another prodigious war credit has been voted, with apparent light-heartedness, by the House. How it is to be provided for will be disclosed later, of which we need only say that, whether it is done by present taxation or by a loan, the interest on which

will have to be paid, the burden will fall with exceeding weight upon women and children.

There were two important debates last week—one on food prices and the other on the government of Ireland. To us who know what the necessities of our people are, and who dread what the coming winter will bring, it was both pitiful and pathetic to read speech after speech, and all of them from well-meaning men, but not one of them shedding any light on the tremendous problems that are before the nation. Wheat land being laid down in pasture; uncultivated land still lying fallow; milch-kine being sent to the butcher, and children in the working districts of our great cities lacking their natural food. So the sad record ran.

How is it possible for a woman with eight children—either a widow or a mechanic's wife or the wife of a soldier at the Front—receiving the statutory allowance, to give her children, or even the younger ones, sufficient milk when the price is sixpence a quart? Such questions as these—and there are many others, for bread, sugar, and meat are all costly now—were merely discussed. No one seemed to have thought out any remedy. Nor did it seem possible to fix the blame of the high prices anywhere. A woman was needed in that august Chamber to say plainly and with determination, "The children must be given their natural food. You cannot afford to lose them, or to let them grow up stunted and deficient. Take over the milk, as you have taken over the munitions. See to it that the municipalities distribute it at a fair price, or in cases of great poverty give it. Do this as you can, but save the children!"

The debate on the Government of Ireland Bill, with its piteous admissions of failure, called to our memory the brave struggle of the women of Ireland for representation, and set us dreaming of what might have been if, in place of the "stupidities and malignities" of the War Office and the obtuseness of politicians, men and women intent on reconciliation, and gifted with love and wisdom, had conducted negotiations between the peoples.

These problems existed before the war. That, however, has intensified them. What we ask is: Should there have been any war at all?

Let it be clearly understood that we do not look at this question from the Foreign Office point of view. We do not say that, given the situation which international politics had created, this country could have backed out. We leave diplomatic word-splitting and treaty making and breaking to diplomatists, with the iron fist behind them. We are thinking of the women of all nations. One of the reasons, perhaps the chief reason, for the perpetual recurrence of the war madness is that most of the European nations are under one-sex rule.

That brings us to the future. In a late issue of *The Nation* there is an appalling article entitled "Mankind's Alternatives." In broad lines the writer traces a picture which must haunt all those who have visualised it, of the state of Europe if militarism is allowed to triumph. "It is no good," he says, "trying to laugh the appalling vision away, or to make light of destruction's chance."

"This war has proved that, when it comes to war, no means of slaughter are too foul to be used, no pledge too solemn to be broken."

Populations must decline, both in numbers and quality, for the strong will be taken and the weaklings left. Vast tracts of fertile land will be rendered unfit for cultivation. Marking the frontier between the countries will be "a complicated series of trenches with steel entanglements,"

MRS. MOORE ON THE VOTE.

The old lady knitted with energy, as she sat at her door looking out over the bare fields of County Antrim.

"You ought to come round this country, miss, and talk to us now. You suffrage ladies seem to forget the likes of us, who don't know anything about your town wages or your awful houses. We get the money from the hens and, sure, them turkeys will fetch a fine price at Christmas. But all that you were telling me about how they gave them poor men at—Camp in the West tea made with the water the cabbage was boiled in, and then were surprised when the men went and got drunk, and how they threw the cheese into the sea because they couldn't eat all the lot they had, and how the men were dying at that place they call Kut or something, and the Government wouldn't let the women's hospital go help—I doubt they want to keep the women out, no matter about the work. And then about the saving, miss. The ladies at that big meeting in town told us we shouldn't wear silk stockings, or get drunk, or waste sugar. Maybe they wear silk stockings themselves; I never seen the like. As for the sugar, I was reading in the paper last night about the hundreds of tons the big distillery in town uses, and nothing done to stop that. Then about the drinking. That paper you gave me told how the women in Australia had got the drink places closed at six o'clock. Now, there's many a man would get home at night without having drink taken, if it wasn't for so many public-houses along the road when he's tired and wanting his supper. They've tried to close the public-houses, did they? Well then, why don't they quit talking and be doing something to get the vote? As long as I can mind, there's been talk about the drink, and we're no better for it all. I seen in the paper how the magistrate gave an old woman a month's hard labour for stealing a shirt. She only took it to keep her daughter's husband from beating her; he went and pawned it, and the old body was sent to prison and not a ha'porth done to the man. There's more cleverality than justice about them laws, miss.

"Did you ever hear tell of my niece, the teacher at the Strade school? She gets £45 a year, and there's Mr. McAfee, the teacher in the Clough school, with no more children, and he gets £81. Now, I seen in the paper yesterday how the teachers are to have a bolus, and McAfee he'll get three shillings, and my niece she'll only get one-and-sixpence. I doubt it's because she's a woman, for she's her mother to keep, and McAfee he's nobody but himself. I'm thinking Beattie won't give her the loaf for less because she's a woman. Maybe they think she should eat less, and that's why they're always telling the women they should save, and never say a word about the men."

DORA MELLONE.

Australian Women Vote in England

Australian nurses on active service enjoyed the same privilege as the Australian fighting men in voting on important questions now being considered in their own country.



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in which for long periods of time the bravest and best of our sons will be compelled to live. Ah! have any of us realised what an experienced soldier has called "the endless and loathsome physical exhaustion" of modern warfare? The inane Press gives us pictures of "Tommy" writing a letter home, of "Tommy" kicking a football about, or clearing a dug-out of men, as bewildered as himself, and still more exhausted, of "Tommy" trudging gaily through miry roads, singing "Tipperary." Little do the writers know of the awful realities of such a war as this. Yet it is to this the lovers of militarism would condemn the men of the future.

There is another alternative, and surely the time has come for all of us—especially women—knowing that it is possible, to make up our minds as to what we shall do in the future, to bring it to pass. Never again must the world be built up on domination. One-sex rule has proved itself incapable of true world service. Men's civilisation, with its material strength and physical splendour, has failed. If we would save ourselves and the nations of Europe we must try another way.

How, it may be asked, are we to enter upon it?

First, by obeying the spiritual demand which—consciously and unconsciously—is being sent out by the peoples. Justice—love—something—anything—to bring about reconciliation between the nations! This is the demand. And next to remember that in mental and spiritual qualities there is no sex. We are revolted, men and women alike, by the horror and misery that are around us. We have received the same gospel, we have been inspired by the same vision. We are seeing everywhere that "group egoism, national, class, and race egoism, is no lovelier than individual egoism."

Then, in God's name, let us go forward together! Let there be no longer names of abstract virtues which are expected from women, and to which men give lip-homage and respect afar off. Let them be practical virtues, taught at home and in school, brought out into the world to be used, given their place as dominating factors in the life of the future.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. When men deny us our right as citizens, we point to the world that they have made and ask them if they are satisfied with it.

Our hope of redemption is in the feeling, very general now, that civilisation must be started on new lines. We are ready to make any and every sacrifice because we know that the true line of action will only be found when all the resources of the State in knowledge, wisdom, and experience are brought to bear upon the difficulties with which it is faced. This is our justification. On this, as a League, we stand.

C. DESPARD.

SUPPORT YOUR LEAGUE AND WIN THE VOTE.

Some months ago the Women's Freedom League decided to raise a sum of 50,000 shillings.

We already have 14,965. Franchise reform is in the air; it is the work of the League, as the Suffrage Society which has continued active Suffrage work from the first day of the war, to insist that women, the majority of the nation and the mothers of the race, shall be enfranchised at once.

Please enable us to do this, a great deal of money is necessary, and we must complete our 50,000 shillings to carry us to victory.

There are 35,035 shillings still needed, and needed at once, and the help of all our members and friends will be most gratefully received and acknowledged.

E. KNIGHT.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases are not being pigeon-holed and forgotten. The Government has been stung into activity; steps have already been taken with regard to treatment, and Government Departments, aided by the Press, are seeking to arouse the public to a realisation of the grave danger to the country. A publicity campaign was started by a meeting at the Mansion House on October 24, addressed by Lord Sydenham, who presided in the unavoidable absence of the Lord Mayor, Mr. Walter Long, President of the Local Government Board, Mr. Herbert Samuel, Home Secretary, Mr. A. F. Buxton, Chairman of the London County Council, Sir Thomas Barlow, and others. The hall was crowded, chiefly with men, and it is not surprising that the general attitude was to regard the question from the point of view of danger to the health of the fighting men and of the decreasing birth-rate. Lord Sydenham advocated more women police and patrols, and urged the payment of a living wage to women as a means of lessening prostitution.

Mr. Walter Long rejoiced that the conspiracy of silence had at last been broken. Compulsory notification, after advice from experts, had been rejected as likely to hinder rather than help. Mr. Herbert Samuel, who was much concerned about the difficulty of convicting women of solicitation, and lamented that the only penalty was a fine, advised the extension of women police, and advocated for them equal pay for equal work.

Sir Thomas Barlow spoke strongly in favour of women's hospitals, officered by women, and urged the necessity of facilities for the cure of married women victims. No reference was made to the guilt of men, or to the control or influence which officers should bring to bear over the soldiers under their command.

Notification.

An agitation has been suddenly engineered in the Press demanding the immediate introduction of compulsory notification and treatment of all persons affected by these diseases. In view of the readiness to throw all blame upon women, it is easy to see how the door may be opened to abuse and injustice. The following letter was sent to the Press on October 23 by the Women's Freedom League:

We notice in to-day's Press an address to the "thinking public," signed by a number of ladies of more or less influence in the social world.

"The signatories (although in most cases their qualifications to speak on this particular point are presumably absent) demand the immediate introduction of notification and compulsory treatment of venereal diseases.

"The Women's Freedom League, therefore, finds it necessary to point out that these measures re-introduce the worst evils of the wicked and discredited Contagious Diseases Acts, with all the special injustices to women that followed in their train. The analogy of these diseases with other diseases which are notifiable is false and misleading; no social ban attaches to these other ailments, and the sufferer has little reason to conceal them.

"The Women's Freedom League recommends all who have this question at heart to read the report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases and weigh the facts there noted for themselves—the problem is most difficult, but methods which involve further degradation to women can only aggravate it.—Yours faithfully,

C. DESPARD, President.

E. KNIGHT, Hon. Treasurer.

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD, Secretary.

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WHEN THE VOTE IS WON.

DEAR EDITOR,—In regard to the letter from Winifred and Granville Giles, may I say that the paragraph containing the "Objects" of the Women's Freedom League, published every week on the front page of THE VOTE, supplies an answer to the questions asked? I feel sure that all suffragists should be prepared to stay in their organisations after the vote is won, and to work at elections and in all constituencies so as to get strong bodies of women pledged and organised until the last vestige of political or constitutional inequality between men and women be swept away.

The first thing to attack is the naturalisation laws which rob women of their birthright; the next, to secure equal parental rights for mothers with fathers. There are professional, industrial, and educational restrictions to be broken down; and there are social reforms, such as the care and feeding of children, the sick and the aged, the adulteration of food and drink, and the supply of public refreshment, to be attacked. There are also such questions as breaking the power of the party system and the press. A programme has been put together, but not yet discussed or agreed to, by the instruction of our Conference in October, 1915.

Meanwhile, we hope members will stick to the Women's Freedom League, and be themselves the originators and designers of the policy that they desire to see carried out, for self-government is the only government worth having, and it is to "the people"—i.e., the members—that Headquarters must look to know the channels in which our activities should run.

EUNICE G. MURRAY.

GREEN, WHITE, AND GOLD FAIR.

The following is a list of stalls and stallholders to date:

GENERAL.—Mrs. Tanner and Mrs. Oliver.
 WHITE.—Mrs. Cobden Sanderson and Mrs. Whetton.
 OLDE CURIOSITIE SHOPPE.—Mrs. Abbot and Mrs. Gush.
 TOY.—Mrs. Mockford, Mrs. Lindus, and Mrs. Aaron.
 HOME-MADE PROVISIONS.—Mrs. Catmur, Mrs. Terry, Mrs. Thomson, and Miss Triplett.
 COMFORTS FOR SUFFERERS IN WAR.—Mrs. Thomson.
 "THE VOTE" (in memory of Mrs. Snow).—Miss Snow, Miss Holman, Miss A. A. Smith, and Mrs. Tritton.
 LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL.—Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Mustard.
 LITERATURE.—Miss Margaret Hodge.
 HANDKERCHIEF.—Miss Sidley.
 WELSH.—Miss Clark.

The following societies have agreed to take a stall each, the proceeds of which will be devoted to their own funds:—Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, Friends of Armenia, Independent W.S.P.U., Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U., United Suffragists, Women's Freedom League Nine Elms Settlement, Women's Market Garden Supply.

The arrangements for entertainments in the Council Chamber are well in hand, and amongst these will be a Grand Allies' Concert, Plays by members of the Actresses' Franchise League, and a performance by Miss Clara Reed (of Hasluck's Academy) and her pupils. The "Violet Clark" Quartette will play at intervals in the Large Hall.

London Branches Council.

Will members of the Council kindly note that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 1, instead of October 26, at 6.30 p.m., at Headquarters? The ordinary monthly meeting will be held before this at 6 p.m. The jumble sale has had to be unavoidably postponed for two weeks, and will therefore be held on Saturday, November 18, at Tolmer's-square Institute. Please send your gifts to Mrs. Fisher, 144, High Holborn, and offers of help to Miss Mitchell.

THEY SUPPORT US!

BRANCH NOTES.

Croydon. Office: 32a, The Arcade, High-street.

As there remain but few Fridays—October 27, November 3 and 10—before the Green, White, and Gold Fair, members and friends are urged to be present at all the sewing parties, which will be held as follows:—October 27, at The Whitehouse, Heathurst-road, Sanderstead; November 3, at 9, Morland-avenue. Any member who cannot attend, but can work at home, should send to the hon. secretary for a cut-out garment to make at her leisure. To help the Fair the secretary asks for articles of silver that are of no more use to the owners, such as brooches, chains, worn-out thimbles, &c. Our grateful thanks are given to Miss Grover for the many pretty and useful articles she has already sent for the Fair.

Edinburgh Suffrage Shop, 90, Lothian-road.

On Wednesday evening a most interesting description of welfare work amongst girls was given to the branch by Miss Whalley, who has had charge of this department in an important Edinburgh printing firm for some years. Now that the value of such work is being officially recognised in the most practical form—by Government appointments, for example—it is good to hear of its beneficial results in such a case as that of this firm, who had found, as Miss Whalley's audience felt, an ideal worker for a post requiring very special qualifications.

At a business meeting the same evening Miss Wood submitted her financial report, which, considering the difficulties of the times, was of a satisfactory nature. But it is with the deepest regret that we have to report that Miss Wood finds it necessary to resign from the position of treasurer to the branch. Her services during the past years of stress and strain have been invaluable and unique, and it is quite impossible to express in words our deep sense of indebtedness to her. Fortunately, we have in Miss Nannie McLaren, who has been assistant treasurer for some time, an able successor.

Middlesbrough.—Suffrage Club, 232a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

A business meeting was held on October 16. Mrs. Schofield Coates presided, and there was a good attendance. A telegram was sent to the Electoral Reform Conference urging the inclusion of votes for women in the recommendations to the Government. A letter was sent to a Trade Union conference held in the town this week to consider food prices, asking them to urge the authorities to take control of the supply and price of milk in the interests of the poorer mothers and babies. The half-yearly report of the Middlesbrough and District Women's Council (to which this branch is affiliated, and of which Mrs. Schofield Coates is hon. secretary) was read, showing the splendid work which has been accomplished by the Council and future work in contemplation. Miss Lee was elected to be joint hon. secretary with Mrs. Larnour.

The centre has now been enlarged, and comprises five large rooms and the shop. The adjoining rooms have been decorated and furnished, and the café will be ready for business in a short time. One of the rooms is to be sublet for meetings and another is the private office. The business of the shop has been extended by Miss Lee to include fancy and useful articles, suffrage literature, and anything that will sell well and yield sufficient profit to justify the stocking of it. The purpose is to make the club and rooms self-supporting. It is proposed to make the sewing meetings on Tuesdays a regular feature during the winter months; as the rooms are delightfully cosy, members and friends should be attracted to spend afternoons and evenings there. Tea can always be obtained at a very reasonable price. For non-members of the League the use of the rooms and an excellent library of the best literature and periodicals can be

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enjoyed for a charge of 5s. a year. We have not yet completed our syllabus of meetings and speakers, but have received promises of dates from Mrs. Aldridge, who will lecture on "Serbia," Miss Margaret Hodge on "Where British Women Vote," and Mr. John Scurr on "The Discovery of Woman."

Reading.

A very interesting and well-attended meeting of members and friends was held on Thursday last, in the committee-room, Recreation Club, 42, Oxford-road. Miss Anna Munro presided, and after briefly expressing her pleasure at again meeting the members and commencing the work of a new session, spoke of the urgent necessity for the counsels of women in the affairs of the nation, the need for their voice and their vote, as well as the work of their hands. Miss Eunice Murray, who met with a very hearty reception, spoke of the present position, work, and pay of the women, and the changed attitude towards them of certain Cabinet Ministers, but urged them not to put their faith in present promises of favours to come, but continually to demand justice, and insist that giving the vote to women is not a payment for services rendered during the war, but a matter of right and equity. Light refreshments were served by Mrs. Whitehouse and Mrs. Wilkinson, and entertaining monologues were given by Miss Hill and Miss Withnall, to whom our thanks are given. Several new members were made at this meeting, which was very successful. Particulars of whist drive and jumble sale will be given next week.

The Despard Arms.

In a fortnight we shall have Christmas puddings for soldiers ready for sale—probably 1lb. in weight, and in tins—and we ask all readers who intend to send puddings to men abroad or in camp at home to buy from us. They may be sure of excellent puddings, most carefully made. Prices and other particulars next week. A large and most appreciative audience filled our recreation-room last Sunday evening to hear Mrs. Aldridge's story of her experiences in Serbia, and everyone was sorry when so good a thing had to come to an end. A Canadian soldier, about to be decorated for courageous service and rewarded by a commission, also told of his experiences in the Big Push in France. Two great responsibilities are weighing on us at the moment: Furniture (chests of drawers, washstands, cupboards, looking-glasses, etc.) for our new bedrooms, and—our coal-cellar! Where are the helpers so urgently needed for Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings, and one half-day, probably Friday, every week? Our footballers achieved a great victory of 6-0 against a good team last Saturday, and think they deserve a new ball, but funds are low. Will any sporting friend help? Our grateful thanks to Mrs. Clark for a most welcome gift of £1.

Women's Freedom League Settlement.

We have to thank Miss Mammie Reid for bath towels and children's clothing; Mrs. Vincent, Gobowen, garden produce, and Hon. Mrs. Edmonds for paying carriage; D. Delbanco, Esq., 1½ cwt. of rice; Mrs. Delbanco, 1s. for Boy Scouts and jumble goods; P. H. Miller, Esq., a sack of apples, walnuts, beetroot, and turnips; Miss Ibbotson, flowers; Mrs. Giles, jumble goods; Mrs. Thompson, stewing pears and bath towels; Miss Ashbee, a monster scrap-book; Miss Riggall, two pictures, 1s., and saucapan-brush; Mrs. E. M. N. Clark, Mrs. Brend, and Mrs. Vera Clark, six very dainty toilet outfits for the guest children, brushes and combs, brush and comb bags, washing-gloves and sponge-bags, also three pairs of shoes. Some bath towels have come in this week; another half-dozen would complete our bathroom equipment. Another urgent want is a bread-cutting machine for the restaurant, and we again remind readers of our stall at the Fair, for which contributions of any sort of provisions will be gratefully received. We want to have on sale groceries, cakes, sweets, mincemeat, chocolates, crackers, tea and coffee, jam, marmalade, chutney, fruit, and nuts; flowers for decorating the stall would also be very acceptable.

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