

VOTES FOR WOMEN.



REPORT

OF THE

Second Annual Conference

OF THE

Women's Social and Political Union,

NOW THE

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE,

HELD AT

Caxton Hall, October 12th, 1907.

Called by the Provisional Committee.

Hon. Sec. : MRS. HOW MARTYN,

Office : 18, BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND.

PRICE 4D.

TEL. 15143 CENTRAL.

CONSTITUTION

(Passed at the Conference, 1906).

Name.

The Women's Social and Political Union.

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.

Methods.

The objects of the Union shall be promoted by—

1. Action entirely independent of all political parties.
2. Opposition to whatever Government is in power until such time as the franchise is granted.
3. Participation in Parliamentary Elections in opposition to the Government candidate and independently of all other candidates.
4. Vigorous agitation upon lines justified by the position of out-lawry to which women are at present condemned.
5. The organizing of women all over the country to enable them to give adequate expression to their desire for political freedom.
6. Education of public opinion by all the usual methods, such as public meetings, demonstrations, debates, distribution of literature, newspaper correspondence, and deputations to public representatives.

Membership.

Women of all shades of political opinion who approve the objects and methods of the Union, and who are prepared to act independently of party, are eligible for membership.

Organization.

1. The National Officials shall be an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer, and such Organizers as are from time to time appointed by the Emergency Committee with the approval of the National Council.
2. The National Executive Council of the Union shall consist of the Officers and one Delegate from every Branch, making due contribution to the Central Fund.
3. The contribution required shall be not less than 2d. per month per member.
4. The Branches shall pay their Delegates' expenses to the Council Meetings.
5. The Council shall meet every quarter in London.
6. The EMERGENCY COMMITTEE shall consist of the Officers and Organizers, and two additional National Representatives appointed by the Annual Conference.
7. The Annual Conference of Delegates shall be in October of each year.

Women's Social and Political Union

NOW

Women's Freedom League.

VOTES FOR WOMEN.

REPORT

OF

SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Morning Session, 10-1.

Afternoon Session, 1.45-6.

AGENDA.

Election of Chairman.

Election of Standing Orders Committee.

Election of Tellers and Scrutineers.

Chairman's Address.

Report of the Hon. Secretary of the Provisional Committee.

Report of the Hon. Treasurer of the Provisional Committee.

Resolution:—

That the members of the Provisional Committee, who are not Delegates, be allowed to speak to the motions.

Report of the Hon. Secretary of the original Committee up to September 10th.

Report of the Hon. Treasurer of the original Committee up to September 10th.

Balance Sheet.

Resolutions and Amendments dealing with Organization.

On the motion of Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Billington-Greig was unanimously voted to the chair.

A delegate asked whether it was true that delegates were present representing branches which had decided by a majority not to send such delegates, when the Chairman replied that, to the knowledge of the Provisional Committee, no such delegates were present.

The CHAIRMAN : The first business the Conference will have to undertake is the election of the Standing Orders Committee. In order that the business of the Conference be carried out as quickly as possible we shall have to elect a small Standing Orders Committee to consider any difficulties that arise upon the agenda, and to give us some Standing Orders as to the length of speeches and such detail matters. I ask for nominations.

The following ladies were appointed to act on the Standing Orders Committee : Miss Abadam, Mrs. Dice, Mrs. Drysdale, Miss Fitzherbert, and Miss Thompson, who then withdrew to an adjoining room to decide points as to the carrying on of the Conference.

The following three ladies were appointed as joint Tellers and Scrutineers : Mrs. Ayton, Miss Mansell, and Dr. Wilks.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The CHAIRMAN : Fellow members of the Women's Social and Political Union, I am pleased to give a hearty welcome to the delegates who have come here from the different branches scattered up and down the country. I am especially desirous of welcoming them because, on account of the special circumstances under which we meet, their coming here has more than the usual significance. An ordinary Conference is a proof of the united aim that keeps us bound together, but this extraordinary Conference is a proof, not only of the aim that we share, but also of the fact that we agree that in the carrying on of the business of our Association we shall apply those principles of self-government, of equal rights for members, which we are seeking to have applied in the State. (Hear, hear.) The present position in which this Union finds itself is one which, however unfortunate it may be, cannot any further be avoided. We have to face the fact that the difference existing cannot be explained away by any single consideration of a personal or a temporary nature, that, as a matter of fact, it is a fundamental difference between principles that has divided us from our late colleagues, and as such we shall have to accept it, and act upon it. The position on the one side is embodied in the statement that certain members of our Union claim that they alone are to hold for the future the governing power of the whole body. On the other side it is typified by the statement that all members shall be entitled to govern the body which they share in building up, which they share in carrying to a successful issue. These are the claims made on behalf of democratic government. It is conceivable that those claiming autocratic power might be a body of geniuses, they might even be angels from heaven, still their claim would be evil and harmful to the cause, for it would rob the average woman of average parts of all opportunity of self-development and self-government. It is my firm opinion that no angel from heaven was ever good enough, strong enough, capable enough, or far-seeing enough, to be entitled to govern others. It is also my firm opinion that if a woman submits to that kind of government, the result must be that the initiative, the self-development which members ought to be having through the work in that Society are lost, and that those who have respect for themselves and respect for their sisters cannot continue to work in such a Society, and cannot ask for others to do so. Speaking for myself alone, I say

emphatically that I could not give my little iota of service to the Union, and I certainly could not ask from other people their money, service, self-sacrifice, and ability, unless they were to have in that body full recognition of their human rights. (Applause.) Someone has said to me that the effects of this great difference will be to put back the movement a very great number of years, but I do not believe it. I think there is room enough for both an autocratic and democratic body, carrying forward the active propaganda for which this Society has always stood, and as for the effect upon the women themselves, I think that in spite of the many good and great things that we have done in the past as a body, no single one of those things has revealed the growing demand for independence and self-rule among women as this particular cleavage has done. This I think is a good sign, it is a gain. It has made women feel that they must assert themselves *now*, and has shown them that if they are to win the right of independence in the community, they must assert their claim to it in all relations. As my friend the Hon. Secretary of the Provisional Committee and of the Women's Social and Political Union has said on one occasion, if we are fighting against the subjection of woman to man, we cannot honestly submit to the subjection of woman to woman. (Hear, hear.) The democratic machinery of the body has been referred to with a great deal of scorn by some whom I will not name, We have been told that it was ineffective, that it was no use. I want to say emphatically here that I do not think the ineffectiveness of machinery can be used as an argument against all attempts towards perfecting it. It is absurd to say, "Because our machinery is imperfect, we will therefore throw it away. If the machinery is imperfect—and frankly I admit it is—then the spirit of all the members of the Association should be used to perfect that machinery, and it should not be swept away by the autocratic power of anyone. Our work is to perfect what is imperfect, for surely we must recognize that the spirit of the members in an Association like this is a spirit that requires democratic machinery. It is not a thing put on from above, given or granted from any other body of people. It is a garment, as it were, in which our spirit must clothe itself if it is to do its work, and we cannot do away with such machinery in any free Association like ours. It is needed for this first reason, that the spirit that is within us is the spirit of independence, and of equal human right : and it is needed for the further reasons that we cannot manage a big and ever-growing Society without some kind of machinery. If it is to be managed without machinery, and if it is to be managed by the autocratic control of some few, then the only result that can accrue can be this, that a few people at the head may know what they are doing, but the rank and file must follow as an ignorant, unorganized mob. We cannot dream of carrying a revolution like the one we seek by such means, and I must frankly state that, much as I appreciate the genius, devotion, and ability on the other side, I do not think the genius and devotion of 30,000 women would, in an autocratic manner, fulfil our object.

I want to appeal for members of the Conference to give the best possible thought and care, and the best spirit of co-operation and tolerance to their work to-day. We need co-operation, we need to criticize,

and we need to state the *pros* and *cons* of everything that is upon the agenda, and further, we need to do it frankly and without fear, but also tolerantly and without harshness. I do plead with the delegates not to run to the other extreme, and say we must be very critical and very intolerant, because we have been told that no criticism is to be allowed at all. We must criticize; there are many things upon the agenda that many of us disagree with, and we must say so, but we need that good feeling, tolerance and co-operation in the affairs of this Conference which I hope will mark the continued activities of our Society.

Now there are some practical details which I have to submit to you before I conclude my remarks. They are these—the business of this Conference is necessarily much harder than that of an ordinary Conference. We have not only to deal with the ordinary business, but in addition we have to face and determine upon all the many changes made necessary by the cleavage, so that there may be many things upon the agenda which the Provisional Committee (you know it had to rush the agenda out at a few days' notice) have perhaps not arranged properly, perhaps not put in the right places, perhaps not given what the delegates may consider the right position; but I want to say frankly—and the Provisional Committee is behind me in saying it—that everything upon the agenda shall receive the consideration that is required by courtesy and tolerance, they will see that everything there is given a chance. There is another point. Some delegates have come to the Conference bringing new matter, new amendments, new resolutions, which have not been put upon the agenda. These cannot be put on the agenda without doing injustice to the delegates who have not had instructions from their branches upon the new matter. We cannot commit the whole Society to them since some branches have not seen them. We have, therefore, decided to give every single one of the delegates an opportunity of putting these things forward to-morrow morning, when a special Session will be held, at which any matter, any suggestions, can be brought up for consideration. The only condition is that such new matter shall be written out, and shall be placed in the hands of the Secretary between this hour and the close of the last Session to-day. Then there is one further detail. We feel that many of the branches, having only had one meeting since the cleavage took place in our body, have not been able to consider all the possibilities of the many duties which will devolve upon the newly-elected Committee, and we feel that it would be essential, for the sake of that, and for the sake of the minority branches which are not represented here, but which are strongly on our side, for the sake of these minorities, which can re-form and join again after this Conference, and send their delegates to a new Conference, it would be a very good thing to have a special Conference soon, possibly next Spring. There is yet another point—I do not know whether it should really be considered at this stage—but I just indicate it. There are points of difficulty like this—the possession and continued use of the name, our action with regard to any statement to the general public, as to this body and the Clement's Inn body, newly formed on September 10th. These things ought to be settled not only by the elected delegates present, but by those parts of branches which are really branches having remained true to the constitution, but which.

being in the minority, have not claimed representation now because of the possible misunderstanding, and are going to re-form later. They will have no voice at all in what we are doing, unless a further Conference be held. All these things have been considered, and the Provisional Committee, in carrying out its work through the last month, has endeavoured to take no duty on itself that it was not entitled to do by its election, but to leave to the good sense and co-operative action of the Conference all decisions which concern the further action of this Union. I cannot conclude my remarks without pointing out that our general work throughout the length and breadth of the land has depended upon no single individual nor upon any small group of individuals, but on a large number of individuals, who have given of their time and service in generous self-sacrifice. We have done a very great deal of hard work, we have drawn a large number of converts into the ranks, we have impressed the general public with the necessity for this question being dealt with soon, we have dared to suffer for our convictions, and I believe, if we set to work in the right spirit now, if, at this particular Conference, we place the whole of our thought and energy towards the settlement of the many difficulties before us, we shall, in the coming year, realize that by putting the responsibility and initiative upon the rank and file members throughout the country, we shall be able to sow better seed and to reap a greater harvest from the labours that shall follow. (Applause).

At this point the Standing Orders Committee returned, and Miss Abadam read their report.

1. That Chairman has casting vote in case of ties on all matters, except nominations for Committee, when there shall be a re-election.

2. That the time limit for speeches, with the exception of the Chairman's, be 10 minutes, unless it be moved and seconded that the Chairman put it to the Conference to grant any individual speaker an extra 5 minutes.

3. That, to avoid the confusion likely to arise from the variety of terms under which the Committee and the Conference are referred to in the various resolutions, it is advisable to call them severally the National Executive Committee and the Conference.

4. That it will be convenient to take the election of officers and of the National Executive Committee after Resolution 20 has been dealt with, instead of taking it after Resolution 34, as indicated on agenda.

5. That Miss Fitzherbert shall examine the credentials of delegates, that she shall count the delegates, in order to name the number of votes required to elect a candidate on to the National Executive Committee.

Mrs. Swiney moved, and Mrs. Coates-Hansen seconded:—

“That the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee be accepted.” Carried unanimously.

Mrs. How Martyn then read the report of the Hon. Secretary of the Provisional Committee.

The Provisional Committee of the Women's Social and Political Union was called into existence in the following circumstances.

On the evening of Sept. 10th, at a meeting of London members, it was

announced that the following changes had taken place in the Women's Social and Political Union. A new committee had been selected, the Conference previously called for Oct. 12th had been abandoned, and that part of the constitution relating to organization abolished, the name of the Union had been modified, and the relation with the branches completely altered. Resolutions effecting these changes had been carried by Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and five organizers at a committee meeting held on the same afternoon.

Several members of the Union, dissatisfied with such arbitrary proceedings, which entirely ignored the rights and desires of the members of the Union, called a public meeting for the afternoon of September 14th to consider the crisis thus created in the Union. Some seventy members were present and a resolution was carried that a Provisional Committee consisting of six members should be formed to act with Mrs. Despard, Mrs. How Martyn, and Miss Hodgson. Its duties to be:—

1. To send a communication to the unconstitutional section of the Committee, calling upon it to carry out the Constitution with regard to the meeting of the Conference on October 12th. If the reply to this was unsatisfactory they were further empowered to:—

2. Circularize the branches of the W.S.P.U. to call the Conference at the time already fixed according to the Constitution and to make all arrangements necessary.

3. To consider the placing of an embargo on the Union funds and so determine whether the present autocratic Committee has power to spend them.

Those present voted by ballot and the following were elected: Mrs. Billington-Greig, Mrs. Coates Hansen, Miss Miller, Miss Abadam, Miss Fitzherbert, Mrs. Drysdale, and in case of a vacancy Dr. Helen Bouchier to fill it.

In accordance with these instructions the following letter was sent to Mrs. Pankhurst calling upon her to carry out the Constitution by summoning the Conference. No reply was received to this letter. The Provisional Committee then proceeded to circularize the branches, notifying them that the Conference would be held at the time originally fixed, inviting them to send in resolutions and nominations for the Committee to be considered at the Conference. All these nominations and resolutions are embodied in the agenda before you.

Mrs. PANKHURST.

MADAM,—At a large meeting of members of the Women's Social and Political Union held to-day we were instructed to call upon you to give effect to the Constitution of the W.S.P.U. by causing the Annual Conference of delegates to be summoned to the performance of their electoral duties according to the rights bestowed upon them by the voters of the Conference of 1906.

These rights are still in force, in spite of the attempt lately made by you to alter the Constitution by unconstitutional means.

In default of a satisfactory assurance from you, not later than Tuesday morning next, that the Conference will be so summoned, we wish to state that the duly elected delegates will assemble on the 12th October

and proceed to transact the business of the Union, as their election by the members of this Union empowers them to do.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) EDITH HOW MARTYN.
C. DESPARD.
C. HODGSON.
ALICE ABADAM.
TERESA BILLINGTON-GREIG.
MARION COATES-HANSEN.
IRENE MILLER.
BESSIE DRYSDALE.
MAUDE FITZHERBERT.

Of the sixty-nine branches of the Union eight had already ceased to exist, twenty-one stated that they did not intend to attend the Conference, nine have made no reply to our frequent communications, the remaining thirty-one branches desired to be represented at this Conference, but unfortunately a few of that number have been prevented by their financial weakness.

Thus out of fifty-two branches which have communicated with us, thirty-one signified their desire to be represented here to-day, which, everything considered, compares satisfactorily with the Conference of last year, when out of thirty-two branches twenty were represented.

The Provisional Committee has sought legal opinion on the present position of the Union which declares that the ultimate power in the Union rests with the members, and that, therefore, the best course to follow was to summon the Conference, and to let that Conference decide what action the Union should take with reference to the name, property, and funds.

The Editor of *Women's Franchise* published our news under the heading Women's Social and Political Union. Votes for Women. I regret to say that this has served as an excuse for the paper being dropped by the section now calling itself the N.W.S.P.U., thus endangering the life of the paper. Our thanks are due to the Editor for putting the principle on which he based his paper—that of opening his pages to all workers for the cause—before the financial loss thus occasioned.

I regret to have to state that there has been much misrepresentation, especially over the attitude of some of us towards political parties. There is no truth whatever in these reports, and they were emphatically denied in the public press directly they were made—especially in a letter of Mrs. Despard's of September 17th, and in one to the *Labour Leader* of September 27th which follows:—

To the Editor of the *Labour Leader*.

Sir,—In the account given of the dissension in the W.S.P.U., in your issue of the 20th September, several statements appear which require emphatic contradiction.

Those of us who are protesting against unconstitutionality in our Union have neither "seceded" from that Union nor have we in any way denied or departed from its policy or principles.

We hold by the policy of absolute independence of political party, in spite of Mrs. Pankhurst's assertions to the contrary.

In your leading article you say: "We do not trust Liberal and Tory women politicians." May we say that we do not trust "Liberal, Tory, or Labour men politicians." Our reason for including Labour men is that we note, for instance, that the equalization of the laws with respect to marriage, divorce, illegitimacy, guardianship of children, intestacy and inheritance, all of which press unfairly on the women, does not find a place on the programme of the I.L.P. and her political enfranchisement is only placed at the bottom of the said programme. Women will be unwise to trust to any political party until these things are given a first place and appear in the King's Speech.

Women may as well recognize that British Socialism to-day is masculine Socialism, with a patronizing side thought for the women at rare intervals. We cannot afford to entrust our movement to a body of men who, though advanced beyond other men in that they admit women to some place in their scheme, have not yet learned to view life and its problems from the dual point of view—that of free woman on an equality with free man.

(Signed) EDITH HOW MARTYN,
C. DESPARD,
C. HODGSON,
B. DRYSDALE,
TERESA BILLINGTON-GREIG,
ALICE ABADAM,
M. FITZHERBERT,
MARION COATES-HANSEN,
IRENE MILLER.

The personal insinuations which have been made are beneath notice.

The work carried out by the Provisional Committee has been entirely voluntary, and while thanking all the members who have helped in this way, our especial thanks are due to Miss Biggs, who has devoted the greater part of her time to the work.

Mrs. SPROSON (Wolverhampton): Madam Chairman, fellow delegates, and friends, I should like to ask the General Secretary if, on that occasion when the National Committee was practically disbanded on its old and original lines, there was any statement given, or a distinct statement given, by the Organizing Secretary in particular, as to why we should abolish our old policy, the original policy, and disband the next Conference.

Mrs. DESPARD was called upon to reply, as Mrs. How Martyn had not been present at that meeting.

Mrs. DESPARD: It is rather a difficult question to answer, because as a fact, on that occasion, the reasons given were so exceedingly vague. So far as I can absolutely remember (but you must remember that it came to us who were sitting on the Committee as a very great shock—I had never been warned in any way), so far as I could understand, it was thought that the branches might have changed in some way the constitution of the Committee. I imagine myself (one ought not to speak about imaginations), but I suggest it resulted from the fact that certain branches had sent in by that time certain resolutions and certain nominations that they proposed to bring in. Then there was also what I considered a change in the conditions of membership brought forward. Remember,

please, that I was sitting there as Hon. Secretary, and was therefore responsible for the honour of the whole Society. This particular pledge, which you have all seen, was handed round for every one to sign. I declined to sign it, giving but one reason for not doing so, and that was that it was a new condition of membership, and that I considered that it ought to be put before the whole of the rank and file of the Conference before it was accepted. Then I pointed out that, although I was Hon. Secretary, this meeting was not convened by me. Then it was that these various resolutions, with practically no reason, were brought forward, the abandonment of the Conference, and the choosing of a new Committee. I sprang to my feet, and asked on what authority was this new Committee chosen. I was answered, "On Mrs. Pankhurst's authority." I cannot give any other statement than that, and I hope it is satisfactory so far as the delegates are concerned. It appears to me that the reason was that there was a fear on the part of the Committee that there might be a change in the constitution of the governing body.

A VOICE: Who summoned the meeting?

Mrs. DESPARD: Mrs. Pankhurst. I began by offering to read the minutes, and when they were refused, I asked why this meeting was called in this irregular manner. I offered my opinion about the irregularity of the meeting.

Mrs. SPROSON: I take it, Madam Chairman, that that meeting, which practically abolished the next Conference, was altogether illegitimate.

Mrs. DESPARD: Absolutely—the whole business.

Mrs. SPROSON: That the constitution outside this Provisional Committee is entirely illegitimate, that the whole course of the proceedings, from beginning to end, is illegitimate?

Mrs. DESPARD: Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN: That I believe is confirmed by legal opinion; but I also understand, unfortunately, that the legal status of an unregistered Society is such that, unless you have very stringent rules, it will always be possible for you to be played fast and loose with as a society.

Lady RAMSAY (Aberdeen): May I ask if this pledge which members were asked to sign is not included in the constitution of the Union?

The CHAIRMAN: That, Lady Ramsey and delegates, is a matter of opinion. Some delegates regard it as an unchanged condition of membership, some as a change, but in any case no autocratic body had a right to force it upon the whole Union until it had been accepted by a Conference.

Mrs. DESPARD: What was actually new was the signing of a pledge.

Lady RAMSAY: I should just like to point out that it seems to me contained in the paragraph headed "Membership"—"Women of all shades of political opinion who approve the objects and methods of the Union, and who are prepared to act independently of party, are eligible for membership." This simply seems to me to be a pledge asking members to say that they are going to act independently of any political party. They may not be pledged to sign it, but it seems to me that the two things are practically the same.

Mrs. DESPARD: Are candidate and party the same? We might have a candidate independently of any party.

The CHAIRMAN: We might have a Woman's Suffrage candidate, but

the whole matter is one which will have to come up on the ordinary agenda. You will find that it is dealt with on the last page but one.

Mrs. McKEOWN (Brighton): Was it not an unconstitutional thing for the Women's Social and Political Union to allow any of its members to sign a pledge of that sort? I consider that the unconstitutional action came in then, and if I had been sitting on the Committee in London I should have resigned.

The CHAIRMAN: I think our delegates are muddling up two positions. The first is the pledge recently put forward by the Clement's Inn section of the Union, and the other, which I think Mrs. McKeown is referring to, is the pledge which Mrs. Despard gave at the I.L.P. Conference. I believe that that pledge, which has been explained in the newspapers by Mrs. Despard, is merely that she would not take part in the election of some particular candidates.

Mrs. McKEOWN: All Liberal women who now object to join us could join us then logically.

The CHAIRMAN: If they did not come to the by-elections and work against us, but merely refrained from all action, I should be extremely glad to see every Liberal woman come in.

Miss MARY SMITH (Fulham): I should like to say that I was present at the Manchester branch when Mrs. Pankhurst returned from the Conference and explained that pledge. Some of the members of the Manchester branch objected to it, and Mrs. Pankhurst said that it did not bind individuals in any way whatever, it was only officials representing the Union who were not to support any candidate, but that individual members of the Women's Social and Political Union could do exactly what they pleased. That was Mrs. Pankhurst's explanation of that pledge, and it was only on that ground that the Manchester branch accepted it.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there anything further to be said? I would prefer that the whole of the discussion under membership should come under the membership clause. It is not in order at this time. The report read by the Secretary did not in any way introduce that point; mark that in your vote.

Mrs. SPROSON (Wolverhampton) moved, and Mrs. Holmes (Croydon) seconded the adoption of the report. This was carried unanimously.

Miss FITZHERBERT (Provisional Committee): Might I bring up one point before we go on any further, that is, the position of certain delegates. I have scrutinized the delegates' cards, and I find that they are all in order with the exception of Miss Turquand's, of Clapham, who was appointed by a large majority of a minority branch. I mean in this way—the branch as a whole refused first of all to send a delegate, then the minority formed themselves into a branch, and have sent Miss Turquand as their delegate. Under these circumstances the delegate naturally wishes to know whether she has voting powers. The other case is that of Mrs. Willson of Halifax. She was appointed delegate a little time ago, and then the Halifax branch, for reasons best known to itself, reversed the decision, but Mrs. Willson is present.

Miss TURQUAND (Clapham): I would like to explain that the matter of sending a delegate was never brought up in our old Clapham branch. We, who are said to have seceded, formed a new branch on the theory that we were really the Women's Social and Political Union, and that

the others were not, that they belonged to another Society altogether, and therefore we considered that we had a right to send a delegate.

Mrs. SPROSON: I think that the position of my friend on my right is perfectly legitimate.

The CHAIRMAN: It will have to be voted upon.

Mrs. WILLSON (Halifax): We had a meeting, and our members decided that the quarrel was a London quarrel, and that the people in the Provinces knew nothing about it. They wanted to know more, and they unanimously decided that they would be represented at the Conference. After that I told them that even if they had not decided to be represented, I should come as a visitor, because I wanted to know what was really the matter. Last week we had a meeting at Halifax at which Mrs. Martel was the speaker, and she found out that we were going to be represented. I might tell you that our women are not women in politics, but they have just come along because of the women having been sent to prison; they resent the indignities being heaped upon women. They immediately turned round and said, "Perhaps after this statement it would be best not to be represented at the Conference." It was a meeting hurriedly called after the public meeting that we had had, and I hardly know what position I ought to take here to-day. It was unanimously passed, but a few did not vote. There was no opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: You have heard the statement of the case. I might add one fact. The delegates will have to decide whether or no these two delegates are to be allowed to act as delegates to this Conference. Miss Turquand's position has been explained to you. There are a large number of visitors here in the same position. Although they belong to groups that could claim to be branches, yet they felt it was best not to do so under the circumstances. However, I do not want to influence you in any way.

It was unanimously decided that Miss Turquand should be allowed to act as delegate.

Mrs. SPROSON: I should like to ask Mrs. Wilson if, after their branch decided to send a delegate to this Conference, they called a branch meeting, and rescinded the original resolution.

Mrs. WILLSON: It was at the close of the meeting that we had had, and the members were asked to stay behind and discuss this. Personally, I am not at all particular about voting. I simply wanted to be at the Conference.

Upon it being put to the vote, sixteen delegates voted against, and six in favour of, Mrs. Willson being allowed to vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT

REPORT OF TREASURER OF PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

The Provisional Committee, as you have already heard on the emergency which arose on September 10th, were given the work of organizing and arranging for the Conference. This could not have been done without a certain expenditure, and they had no power to appeal for funds. But friends have helped us generously, and I am happy to be able to report that all expenses are paid, that, in fact, there is a small balance to our credit.

The following is an account of the receipts and expenditure:—

| RECEIPTS. | | | EXPENDITURE. | | | |
|--|----|----|--------------------------------------|----|----|---|
| £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | |
| Affiliation Fees from Branches | 3 | 0 | Hire of Halls | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| Collections, Sale of Agendas and Papers | 7 | 3 | Expenses of speaker to Manchester | 1 | 19 | 5 |
| Donations— | | | Printing for Confer- ence | 4 | 17 | 0 |
| Mrs. Coates-Hansen | 10 | 0 | Postage & stationery | 13 | 19 | 9 |
| Mrs. Channing | 0 | 1 | | | | |
| Mrs. Despard | 5 | 0 | | | | |
| Mrs. Drysdale | 0 | 5 | | | | |
| Mrs. Foster | 1 | 0 | | | | |
| Miss Graves | 0 | 10 | | | | |
| Miss Cicely Hamilton | 0 | 2 | | | | |
| Miss Harbord | 0 | 2 | | | | |
| Mrs. Harbord | 0 | 2 | | | | |
| Miss Mocatta | 1 | 0 | | | | |
| Miss O'Halloran | 0 | 2 | | | | |
| Dr. Elizabeth Wilks | 6 | 0 | | | | |
| | 24 | 5 | Balance in Hand | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| | | 6 | | | | |
| Total | 34 | 9 | Total | 34 | 9 | 3 |

Our best thanks are due to Miss Shaxby, who placed her flat at our disposal for use as a temporary office, to Miss Lawson for the loan of a typewriter and duplicator, and to the voluntary workers through whose devoted service we were able to get our work done so economically.

Mrs. Despard then read her Report as Hon. Treasurer of the Provisional Committee. Its adoption was moved by Mrs. Ayton (Darlington), seconded by Mrs. Swiney (Cheltenham), and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: We now have a resolution which I hope will be moved by some delegate, "That the members of the Provisional Committee, who are not delegates, be allowed to speak to the motion." The request here made is simply to give members of the Provisional Committee who are not delegates the power to speak to motions—the same power which is generally held by all members of retiring Committees. In this case, not being an ordinary retiring Committee, we felt it better to put it on the Agenda.

The resolution was moved by Mrs. Sainty (Letchworth), seconded by Mrs. Grant (Edinburgh), and carried unanimously.

The history of the Women's Social and Political Union may be divided into two parts, external and internal.

The external history of the Union is necessarily a history of the propaganda, this has taken place mainly along three lines.

1. Demonstrations involving imprisonment.
2. Agitation at by-elections.
3. Ordinary constitutional means of propaganda: public meetings, formation of branches, and sale of literature.

DEMONSTRATIONS AND IMPRISONMENTS. — Dealing first with the demonstrations, on October 23rd, at the opening of the autumn session of Parliament, a demonstration in the lobby of the House of Commons and outside resulted in the arrest of ten members of the Union:—

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Baldock, Mrs. | How Martyn, Mrs. | Montefiore, Mrs. |
| Billington-Greig, Mrs. | Kenney, Miss A. | Pankhurst, Miss A. |
| Cobden-Sanderson, Mrs. | Miller, Miss Irene | Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. |
| Gawthorpe, Miss | | |

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was arrested the next day, and eleven women went to Holloway Prison. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and Mrs. Montefiore remained in prison only a few days, Miss S. Pankhurst served her sentence of a fortnight, the remaining eight suffered thirty-two days imprisonment, and would gladly have finished their two months, but they were released by the Government to serve as an electioneering expedient during the Huddersfield by-election.

During December three attempts were made to hold meetings within the precincts of the House, and twenty-one members,

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Armstrong, Mrs. | Heppell, Miss | Morrissey, Mrs. |
| Baines, Mrs. | Hill, Mrs. Keating | Richardson, Miss |
| Chatterton, Mrs. | Hillier, Mrs. | Smith, Miss Mary |
| Davis, Mrs. | Johnson, Mrs. | Smith, Miss Olivia |
| Drummond, Mrs. | Jones, Mrs. Martha | Steel, Mrs. |
| Fisher, Miss | Macdougall, Mrs. | Wells, Mrs. |
| Fraser, Miss A. | Milne, Miss Alice | Woodlock, Miss |

suffered imprisonment for fourteen days each, Mrs. Keating Hill serving twenty-one days as a second offender.

The next demonstration was on the occasion of the opening of Parliament. At a large meeting in this hall a resolution was carried demanding the immediate enfranchisement of women. It was also carried with acclamation that the meeting should form itself into a deputation to carry this resolution to the Prime Minister. Mrs. Despard offered to carry the resolution, and leaving Caxton Hall, the procession started for the House. It was broken up by mounted police and over thirty arrests were made. At a second meeting in the evening, a similar resolution was carried, and a total of fifty-seven arrests were made, resulting in fifty-three imprisonments with terms varying from seven days to a month. The names of these prisoners are:—

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Armitage, Mrs. | Holmes, Mrs. | Smith, Miss Margaret |
| Barratt, Mrs. | Hope, Miss M. | Smith, Mrs. E. |
| Beever, Mrs. | Knight, Miss E. | Smith, Miss Olivia |
| Bright, Miss F. | Kenney, Miss N. | Smith, Miss Mary |
| Cooper, Mrs. | King-Townend, Miss | Sproson, Mrs. |
| Criddle, Mrs. | Lamb, Miss | Stephenson, Mrs. |
| Chatterton, Mrs. | Marsden, Miss | Stephenson, Miss E. |
| Cairns, Miss | Moffatt, Mrs. | Sykes, Mrs. |
| Davis, Mrs. | Morrissey, Mrs. | Taylor, Mrs. |
| Despard, Mrs. | Noble, Miss A. | Titterington, Mrs. |
| Drysdale, Mrs. | Pankhurst, Miss Sylvia | Thompson, Miss |
| Entwistle, Miss L. | Pankhurst, Miss | Varley, Miss |
| Fielding, Mrs. | Rigby, Mrs. | Wells, Miss T. |
| Fitzherbert, Miss | Rozier, Miss H. | Whitworth, Mrs. |
| Gillett, Miss L. | Roy-Rothwell, Mrs. | Wolf Van Sandau, Miss |
| Gillett, Miss E. | Rowe, Mrs. | Woodlock, Miss |
| Hawkins, Mrs. | Sanders, Mrs. | Yates, Mrs. |
| Holland, Miss | Seruya, Miss | |

This success was repeated on March 20th, when the demonstration lasted for about six hours and was witnessed by vast crowds, seventy-five arrests were made, and the following sixty-eight women went to prison :—

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Armstrong, Miss | Hellawell, Mrs. | Pogson, Mrs. |
| Arscott, Mrs. | Higgins, Mrs. | Price, Mrs. |
| Atkinson, Mrs. | Hopson, Miss | Rawle, Mrs. |
| Aves, Miss | Impey, Mrs. | Roberts, Mrs. |
| Barrett, Mrs. | Jackson, Miss | Rozier, Miss Emma |
| Benett, Miss Sarah | Jenkins, Mrs. | Saltonstall, Miss L. |
| Berkley, Miss Lizzie | Jerome, Miss Veronica | Scawthorne, Mrs. |
| Biggs, Miss | Kerwen, Miss | Scholefield, Miss |
| Bray, Miss W. | King-Townend, Miss | Sheard, Mrs. |
| Brooks, Miss | Lacon, Mrs. | Sidley, Miss |
| Burrows, Mrs. | Lamb, Miss Aeta | Smith, Mrs. Janet |
| Chatterton, Mrs. | Leigh, Mrs. | Smith, Mrs. Bessie |
| Cimino, Miss | Lillingston, Mrs. | Sproson, Mrs. |
| Clayton, Mrs. | Lockwood, Mrs. | Thewlis, Miss |
| Clifford, Miss Cecilia | Marsden, Miss | Townshend, Mrs. |
| Clyde, Miss | Milne, Miss A. | Toyne, Mrs. |
| Cobbe, Miss Lilian | Mitchell, Mrs. Eileen | Varley, Miss |
| Connolley, Mrs. | Mitchell, Mrs. | Wilkinson, Miss S. A. |
| Cooper, Mrs. | Montgomery, Mrs. | Willson, Mrs. |
| Draper, Mrs. | Morrissey, Mrs. | Winton-Evans, Mrs. |
| Graves, Miss Florence | Morrow, Mrs. | Woodlock, Miss |
| Gibson, Miss | New, Miss | Wright, Miss A. |
| Hardie, Dr. Mabel | Pinnacle, Mrs. H. | |

Of these Mrs. Chatterton and Miss Woodlock suffered a month's imprisonment without the option of a fine for a third offence. Two more, Mrs. Willson and Mrs. Baines, suffered imprisonment at Leeds on a charge of inciting to a breach of the peace at a meeting.

Thus, since the formation of the Union, there have been 164 imprisonments suffered by 148 women. It is not to be supposed that we have done with imprisonments, though in the future it may be for offences which would be tried in a higher court than the ordinary police court.

(Two men, Mr. Simmons and Mr. Croft, have suffered imprisonment for a fortnight and a month respectively, for daring to defend the women from ill-usage by the police.)

BY-ELECTIONS.—Since last October there have been in all 12 by-elections, in 8 of which we have taken part always in opposition to the nominee of the Liberal Government. At two of these the Government lost seats, at 5 the representation remained unchanged, in each case the Liberal being in a worse position than at the last election. On one only have the Liberals increased their majority.

The independent policy followed by the Union is of the utmost importance, as it is only by standing upon our own feet as a women's political Union can we hope to earn the respect and ultimately the serious consideration of the Government in power.

OTHER METHODS OF PROPAGANDA.—The less attractive methods of

propaganda have not been neglected. Large numbers of indoor and outdoor demonstrations have been held in London, Scotland, and the provinces, details of which would be superfluous; but we have still to look forward to the day when we can fill the Albert Hall without difficulty, and when we can collect 100,000 women in Hyde Park.

This time last year there were 32 branches, of which 9 no longer exist. New branches have been formed, and there are 61 in all.

The branches in Scotland have federated themselves, and formed a Scottish Council, which has resulted in very much increased activity, and much better results from the efforts put forth.

The propaganda work in general is making good progress, and one of the most hopeful signs is the additional vigour and enthusiasm that is showing itself in the provinces.

We may well be satisfied with the work of last year, but we must work with energy to increase the number of members in our branches and to make our demand for the Franchise so insistent that it will have to be granted within a very short time.

I come now to the internal history of the Union. The Conference of last year produced many changes—some of them unexpected—the most important being the disbanding of the old Committee and the substitution of a Quarterly Council and an Emergency Committee. The Emergency Committee acted as the Executive Committee, and the Quarterly Council has never met. This state of affairs is extremely unsatisfactory, and points to the necessity for a properly elected National Executive Committee, meeting at frequent stated intervals.

During the October imprisonment Mrs. Despard and Miss Hodgson were appointed as temporary Hon. Secs., and in December the Committee, not wishing to lose their valuable services, appointed Mrs. Despard joint Hon. Sec. and Miss Hodgson Hon. Sec. of the London branches, with a seat on the Committee.

Early in November Mr. Pethick Lawrence offered to take charge of the Literature Department, and his offer was accepted. A few months later he took charge of the business side of the office work.

ORGANIZERS.—Before the last Conference the organizers of the Union were Miss Billington, Miss Kenney, Miss Pankhurst, Mrs. Baldock, and Miss Gawthorpe. In February Miss Billington resigned and went to Scotland, where, as a voluntary worker, she has carried on the propaganda work in her accustomed successful manner.

During the year Mrs. Martel, Miss Fraser, Miss Adela Pankhurst, Mrs. Drummond, and Miss Nell Kenney have been appointed organizers, though Miss Fraser is now an organizer for the Scottish Council.

OFFICES.—The offices at 4, Clement's Inn, were taken just before the last Conference, and in February another suite of rooms was added, more than doubling the accommodation, at a total rent of 240*l.* per annum.

In reviewing internal matters one is less satisfied than with the external propaganda; but it is to be hoped that this Conference will set to work to remedy some of the grave deficiencies, for upon the proper organization of our internal affairs depends the efficiency of our efforts in the outside world.

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN then read the report of the Hon. Secretary of the original Committee up to September 10th.

Mrs. SPROSON : I should like to know, Madam Chairman, if, when the occasion came that the Joint Hon. Secretaries were unable to work with the original Committee, they could not, without the consent of this Conference, as a Provisional Committee called under emergency, have put a restraint upon the funds there and then.

The CHAIRMAN : I do not know whether, legally, they could have done so, but the meeting of members to which they have appealed gave them only the power to get information, and it was the opinion that the whole of the branches in the country should be consulted first before any such step was taken.

A DELEGATE : May I ask the Secretary why the Quarterly Council was never called ? Was there any reason ?

Mrs. HOW MARTYN : It should have met in January, when we were just preparing for the Demonstration to take place outside the House of Commons, and at the Committee Meeting, when we were discussing that, a motion was proposed, seconded, and carried, that the Quarterly Council should be postponed. Later the question was raised by one or two branches, and it was then found that they had not paid their affiliation fees. Very few branches asked, and I am afraid that was an excuse for the continued looseness and neglect of duty on our part.

The CHAIRMAN : I think the branches are themselves somewhat to blame. Some responsibility rests on the branches, and some on the Committee.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN (Middlesbrough) : We in Middlesbrough did ask, we did protest against the Council not being called. I should like to ask now if the Secretary wrote to the branches, reminding them that they had not paid.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN : A letter was sent to all the branches, either at the end of December or early in January, reminding them that it was necessary to pay their affiliation fees before they could attend.

A DELEGATE : Was there no protest from any branch that the affiliation fee asked was impossible ?

Mrs. HOW MARTYN : There were many protests that the affiliation fee was too high.

The CHAIRMAN : May I point out that, at the last Conference held, it was decided unanimously that where branches were too poor to pay the affiliation fee, but were doing good work in their own districts, it should not be insisted upon ; that service was as good as money any day, and sometimes better ? (Applause.)

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN : Then that points to the fact that the Committee was really responsible for the Quarterly Council Meeting not being held. (Laughter.)

Mrs. SPROSON : I should like to point out here—because, if any litigation should follow, this would be a very important point to raise, I think, in relation to affiliation fees—I asked Mrs. Pankhurst myself what were the relations between the branches and the National Committee so far as affiliation fees went. This was in October of last year. We had not formed the

branch then, you understand, and she said that there was no compulsory rule for branches to pay affiliation fees, that the National Committee were prepared to accept help from the branches if the branches were in a position to render that aid. I take the position as this—that, being an organization newly formed, there was no very tight rule in relation to affiliation fees on that account. We had not really got to that status as an organization in the country from which we could, as it were, use any strong pressure for affiliation fees, and I take it that, so long as the National Committee were prepared to recognize these branches, even though they had paid no affiliation fees, so long as they were prepared to continue the recognition of those branches, those branches were legally branches. This is the position as I understand it.

Mrs. HOLMES (Croydon) : You have not, I suppose, the books here. Could we be told how many branches sent up money ? I know we from Croydon sent up a guinea, under the impression that it would be accepted as an affiliation fee. On settling up at the end of the year, we found that the receipt for the money we had sent up, intending it as an affiliation fee, had been signed as a donation to the expenses of the Conference, which we never intended. I shall be glad to hear if any other branches have had the same experience.

Dr. WILKS (Hackney) : We sent up three guineas, which we intended as an affiliation fee. I am afraid I did not notice how it was acknowledged at the time, but I find we have been put down as one of the branches which has not paid an affiliation fee.

Miss TURQUAND : Surely we want to be fair to everybody, and unless these ladies stated that the money was sent as an affiliation fee, they could hardly expect it to be taken as such.

The CHAIRMAN : The first money sent by a branch should surely be accepted as an affiliation fee, and all after that as donations. But it is hardly just to the branches to accept money as donations, and then tell them that they have not paid their affiliation fee.

Mrs. SWINEY (Cheltenham) : The Secretary of our small branch collected 30s. and sent it up to the Central Society. It was evidently taken as a donation, and afterwards we were asked for the affiliation fee.

The CHAIRMAN : I am afraid we could go on multiplying instances without getting any further.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN : I should like to ask the Secretary if the number of the members of the Emergency Committee remained the same for a year, or if other people were added. It states on the first page of your Agenda that the Emergency Committee shall consist of the Officers and Organizers, and two additional National Representatives appointed by the Annual Conference. Mrs. How Martyn mentions one or two other appointments during the year. I should like to know who appointed these additional members, and on what authority ; or did they merely take the places of members who dropped out ?

Mrs. HOW MARTYN : At the beginning there were on the Committee an Hon. Secretary, an Hon. Treasurer, and five Organizers, and the two members appointed by the last Conference—Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Martel. During the year Mrs. Martel became an organizer, and was not replaced by any one to represent the Conference. Mrs. Despard was made Joint Hon. Secretary by this time, the other organizers came on automatic-

ally, as the Committee says that all organizers are ex-officio members of the Committee. I may say that Miss Fraser never attended Committee meetings, because she was spending all her time in Scotland; Miss Adela Pankhurst only attending one meeting the whole time; Mrs. Drummond, being in London, has, of course, attended most of the Committee meetings since her appointment as organizer.

Miss HELEN WILKIE (Dundee): May I ask whether the Organizers were given notice of the meeting, and asked to attend them?

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: No; unless they were in London, except on special occasions.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I should like to ask who really sent the notices out to those Committee meetings. Evidently, when Mrs. How Martyn is not present, Mrs. Despard does not do it. I should also like to point out how the Emergency Committee has overstepped the mark entirely, and taken the place of the National Executive Council, which was given the power to elect people on the Committee, and no one else. The Emergency Committee has in two cases elected other members, and really a rumpus ought to have been made long before this.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: The summonses to Committee meetings were generally given verbally, because all the people were about the office. If they were not present I wrote to them, but I never summoned the Organizers (except, as I say, on special occasions) who were away, as we never thought of expecting them to leave their work.

Mrs. SPROSON: Is there any rule in existence which gives the organizers voting power?

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: There is no rule to prevent them.

Mrs. SPROSON: Then there is no rule to prevent any of us from voting on the National Executive Committee.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: But then you have not a place on the Committee.

The adoption of this report having been proposed by Mrs. Self (Tottenham), and seconded by Miss Hopegood (Glasgow), was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the special difficulties under which they had had to work, and said that special allowance should be made. (Hear, hear.)

In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer of the original Committee up to September 10th, or of any report, Mrs. How Martyn was called upon to read a statement from the Bank.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: As instructed by the Provisional Committee, I wrote to the Treasurer to ask her for a balance sheet, which she might legally be compelled to give. I received simply an acknowledgment, but no balance sheet. I therefore wrote to the bank to ask for a statement of accounts.

The reply received from the Bank was then read:—

19, Fleet Street, London, E.C.
October 8th, 1907.

MADAM,—We are favoured with your letter of yesterday. The balance of Women's Social and Political Union on September 10th last was 283*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.*, and the present balance of National Women's Social and Political Union 209*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.*

We are, Madam, Yours faithfully,
For BARCLAY & COMPANY, LIMITED,
HERBERT GOSLING.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I wrote and asked the Treasurer to supply me with a statement of accounts by the 11th October, and merely got a recognition of my letter, telling me that I would hear from her later. Yesterday was the 11th; I have not had my statement, so of course I shall take action later on.

The CHAIRMAN: As there is no balance-sheet we will now proceed to deal with the resolutions.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I think enormous sums of money have been spent rather recklessly, and considering that it is only a few months ago that the Union collected about two or three thousand pounds, and we only have a balance in the bank of 209*l.*, I would like to know how it is that the money goes so rapidly, because very little of it, comparatively speaking, is spent in the provinces; and has the Secretary any list of salaries to give us or any notion how the money goes?

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: The money mentioned was collected at the end of May. Our Treasurer says that the expenses are about 100*l.* a week, which would mean sixteen or seventeen hundred pounds. The salaries come to about 30*l.* per week. Of course the office rent is about 5*l.* a week, and I do not know what the petty cash would run to.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: Even then there seems to be a great discrepancy—an enormous expenditure that is not accounted for. The rent is exorbitant; less expensive offices would suffice, and the salaries and rent together hardly come to half the amount of the money spent in a week.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: Of course there are printing and railway fares.

Miss WOODLOCK (Liverpool): I should think in a movement like this one really does not need to go to recklessness to spend money. It takes all the money that comes in, and more, and, speaking of the salaries coming to 30*l.* a week, I think that is very little. I do not consider that there has been the slightest recklessness, when we take into consideration the high rents in London. I think it is perfectly natural that the organizers are paid, and the money has been spent, I consider, in a thoroughly practical manner, and to the best advantage.

The CHAIRMAN: Although we need every penny we can get, we need to spend it well. For instance, two members of the Union visited Scotland a week ago. These two members took single tickets to every station, and a single ticket for the return journey, and by doing so spent considerably more than they need otherwise have done.

Miss WOODLOCK: That is most unbusinesslike, and I hope they won't do it again. (Laughter.)

Mrs. SPROSON: I think we ought to go on to the next business. I do not see how any one here is responsible for this expenditure. (Hear, hear.)

The closure, moved by Mrs. Sproson, and seconded by Mrs. Drysdale, was accepted.

RESOLUTIONS. COMMITTEES AND OFFICIALS.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: The first resolution is in the name of our branch: "That, as the National Executive Council has apparently never met during the past year, it be abolished, and be replaced by an Executive Committee, such Committee to meet at least once a month." We feel very strongly

about the matter. Our branch has been protesting the whole of the year against the management, or the lack of management. We protested against the fact that the National Executive Council, which was elected last year, has never met, and as it has never met, move this resolution. I am not going to make any speech upon it; it is unnecessary.

Mrs. AYTON seconded the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN: May I point out that, according to the ruling of the Standing Orders Committee, you will have to put the word "National" before the word "Executive" wherever it occurs.

Mrs. SPROSON: I take it that the National Executive Committee ought to meet quarterly. As we develop on those lines on which I believe and hope we shall develop, there would be difficulty. The Executive is pretty well constituted in London, but we must eventually get representatives from the provinces, and it would be a very expensive thing indeed to meet monthly. I think that quarterly would be a very much wiser plan for the present.

The CHAIRMAN: I think, to relieve the situation, it would be rather a good plan if Mrs. Coates-Hansen would permit me to break up the resolution into two parts, "That as the National Executive Council has apparently never met during the past year, it be abolished and be replaced by the National Executive Committee," the next point as to when it shall meet being taken later. Is there anything to be said against the first part?

A DELEGATE: Does this imply a different kind of body, or is it practically the same body under another name?

The CHAIRMAN: The National Executive Council cannot be a body made up of delegates from all branches.

Mrs. Coates-Hansen having agreed to the splitting up of the resolution, the vote was taken, and the first part carried unanimously.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: The reason we recommend that the Committee meet once a month is that there is an enormous lot of work to get through, and otherwise it would risk delegating that work to sub-committees, and this important part of the construction of our Union, the building up of the Union throughout the country, we do not want to delegate to sub-committees. We have had quite enough of the Emergency, which has taken a burden on its shoulders to which it had no right. The National Executive Council was to have been composed of sixty members; but a smaller Committee would not be so expensive. It seems to me that it will have to meet at least once a month, at any rate for the next few months, so that we are strongly in favour of a properly summoned Committee meeting monthly, not summoned by word of mouth by the Secretary, as has been done in the past, but notices sent out so many days beforehand, with a proper agenda, so that members may have a chance of attending. If they come from a distance they pay their own railway fares if they can; if not, some arrangement should be made. It is very wrong indeed for secretaries to give notice of meetings by word of mouth, and not to summon every member hours or days beforehand. Things are bound to get muddled if you do that sort of thing. Therefore our branch is very much in favour of a meeting at least once a month.

Miss HOPEWOOD (Glasgow): Am I quite right in thinking that, in the event of such a meeting taking place monthly, the branches would not necessarily have to pay the expenses?

The CHAIRMAN: That comes up later. It depends on the Conference.

Mrs. SPROSON: I should like to ask the mover of the resolution if she would be prepared to accept that the Committee meet every month for one year.

The CHAIRMAN: That is all the Conference can do. Next year you can make it monthly or daily.

Mrs. SPROSON: Under the circumstances I think it would be best for it to meet once a month, as there is great pressure of business.

The second half of the resolution was then put to the vote, and carried: 16 for, 2 against.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: The further resolution which I was instructed to put before the Conference is: "That the National Executive Committee be composed of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, General Secretary, Organizing Secretary, and eight members, to be nominated by the Branches and appointed by the Conference." We feel that we ought to know the people who are doing our work for us, that each branch should have the right to vote for the Executive. In the old Emergency Committee, as the Secretary pointed out, the Organizers automatically went on to that Committee, and we had no say whatever. We think that state of things ought to be done away with, and that we ought to elect our Committee every Conference. We thought that a President was necessary—the Vice-President should take her place if unable to attend—Treasurer, General Secretary. The Organizing Secretary we did not feel very strongly about this year. I think our branch would be quite willing to make it nine members in place of eight, if they thought it better; but we feel very strongly about the resolution being carried in this way. We could elect our own Committee, and call them to book, and have a say in the business at any time in the year.

Mrs. AYTON seconded the resolution.

Dr. WILKS: I think it very unnecessary, in a democratic society like ours, to have a President and Vice-President. (Applause.)

Mrs. SELF: I should like, if I may, to move that we delete the words "President," "Vice-President," "General," and "eight," and for "General" and "eight" substitute "Honorary" and "twelve," and that we join a part of Resolution No. 3 with No. 2, which I think would save a lot of unnecessary work. The amendment to read as follows: "That the National Executive Committee be composed of a Treasurer, Honorary Secretary, Organizing Secretary, and twelve members, to be nominated by the branches and appointed by the Conference, Organizers to be eligible for election, provided always that not more than one quarter of the elected members are salaried persons." I do not think it is advisable that we should have a President, because a President who might be suitable for a social meeting might not be suitable for a business meeting, and the other way about. On the other hand, I think that were we to elect a President at every meeting, we should give every one a chance, and everybody ought to have a chance to learn the President's work. If we only have one, what are we going to do when she is absent, if nobody else knows how to take her place? With regard to the Secretary, I know that there are some who are willing to do the work without being paid, and even if we do attempt to pay them, we could never half pay them for the work and the trouble they are put to. If we have twelve members on the Committee instead of eight, I think we are more likely to get a good

Committee meeting, because some members cannot always turn up, and if one or two turn up you cannot have a Committee meeting. As regards Organizers, I do not think it fair that because a person cannot afford to work for nothing, but has to be paid for her bread and butter, she is not able to work on the Committee.

A DELEGATE: I consider that the President and Vice-President are essential, in so far that it ensures two persons, or certainly one person of responsibility being at the head of each meeting.

Miss TURQUAND: I think that the office of President and Vice-President would be a very great mistake, especially in a body where there is an Organizer, as we hope there will be. It would be very much better to elect a chairman on each occasion.

LADY RAMSAY: I agree with the delegate who has just spoken that a President and Vice-President as permanent officials are very unnecessary.

Mrs. DESPARD: May I say that I think, especially at the present juncture, it would be rather unwise to elect a President and Vice-President. I most earnestly agree with getting everybody to do the different bits of work. I think it is extremely good training to be put occasionally into the chair—good training for speaking and business—and therefore I think that all members ought to have that privilege. And then we do not want in any way to be labelled with any particular names; we are desirous that the Union shall be in the highest and truest sense democratic.

The vote was then taken on the issue as to whether the words "President" and "Vice-President" should be deleted, 19 voting for the amendment, and 3 against.

The CHAIRMAN: The resolution now before the Conference leaves those two words out; the remaining resolution can be amended or passed as it stands.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I think we ought to increase the numbers now.

The CHAIRMAN asked if Mrs. Coates-Hansen would withdraw her resolution in favour of Mrs. Self's amendment, but she refused.

Mrs. DRYSDALE seconded Mrs. Self's amendment.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: We are very much in favour of a paid General Secretary, to be the servant of the Union, who could be called to book if she neglects her duty; and if you pass that resolution with the words "Honorary Secretary," where does our resolution come in?

Mrs. DICE: I should like to support a paid secretary. I do not think we ought to let sentiment come into our Union. Of course we know that a secretary cannot receive enough money to repay her for her services. We want to feel that our secretary is our servant, and can be called to book at any time.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take the question of the Organizers separately. The first point is whether we have a paid or unpaid secretary.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: May I move that No. 6 be taken now? "That the General Secretary be a paid official of the Union."

Dr. WILKS: Cannot we elect a secretary? If she cannot afford to work without being paid, we shall pay her, and if she can we shall be very glad to save the funds.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: The point is this: At present we are not in a position to say how many Organizers we are going to have. We ought to have one servant of the Union in London—a servant in the highest sense

of the term—who is able to take on the work and spend hours a day, if necessary, over it, say from nine to five. Somebody ought to be looking after the work of the Union, and to ask a woman to do that for nothing would be asking too much, and we should have no right then to call her to book. It gives her a standing, and gives us a standing, if she is paid. There is not a big society in England, no national movement in England, that has not got a paid secretary. The Women's Suffrage Society has a paid secretary, and I could enumerate others. There is nothing at all disgraceful about taking payment for work done. If work is done well it is worth being paid for. We ought to collect money to pay the secretary, and be able to demand a day's work from her. Keeping in communication with the branches and the work generally would take an enormous amount of time. We would rather have voluntary organizers than a voluntary secretary, because their work is not half so important as that of the person who has the books, the correspondence, everything that belongs to the Union in her hands.

Mrs. DICE seconded.

Mrs. SPROSON: I should like to support that we have a paid secretary for this reason: We must depend so much upon the secretary, and we must be in a position to call her to book if she does not do what she ought; and that is what you cannot do with an honorary secretary. If, as my friend suggests, we might have a fully qualified secretary who is prepared to do the work voluntarily, she could easily meet the situation by paying her salary back into the funds. (Laughter.)

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: I certainly think that *some* members, at any rate, have not been slow in calling an honorary secretary to book. An honorary secretary should be just as much open to criticism as a paid secretary.

Miss IRENE MILLER: The Central Branch wishes me to state that their opinion was that the secretary should be the best person that we can get, paid or otherwise; but that she should always be assisted by a paid clerk. To refuse a woman who would not accept a salary would be very foolish.

Mrs. DRYSDALE: It seems to me the point is whether the person or the position is the most important. As Mrs. Coates-Hansen says, the secretary's position is a very important one. It is important not only on its official side, but for the enthusiasm and the spirit that you cannot pay for; the great thing is to get the person, and the question of payment ought perhaps to rest with her. Of course we are always in this danger, that if we have an honorary secretary we have not the same hold over her. We are under an obligation, and we should not like her to offer her resignation if we disagreed. It seems to me that persons are more important than positions.

The CHAIRMAN suggested a compromise: "That the General Secretary be paid if circumstances demand it." Upon being put to the vote this was carried, 17 for, 5 against. The resolution was therefore lost.

The CHAIRMAN: We now return to Resolution No. 2. There is the further question of the number of members, and the question of the Organizing Secretary.

Mrs. SPROSON moved that the number of members be 10, independent of officials.

The CHAIRMAN said that there was already an amendment before the

Conference that it should be 12. The next question was whether the Organizing Secretary should be paid or unpaid.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN moved that the Organizing Secretary be paid, as in the case of the General Secretary, if circumstances demanded it.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that certain delegates will oppose it unless this is made clear. I myself am in favour.

LADY RAMSAY: Will the Organizing Secretary be allowed to vote on the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: Not any more than the other paid people, if she is paid. That all depends upon your further resolutions. I should certainly say that an Honorary Organizer ought to be allowed to vote; but the matter rests with yourselves.

The motion of Mrs. How Martyn was seconded by Miss Irene Miller and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: Now we want the number of members. There is a resolution from Middlesbrough that it be 8, an amendment that it be 10, and another that it be 12.

On the vote being taken, the substitution of "12" instead of "8" was carried, 15 for, 2 against.

During this ballot the Chairman read a letter from the Darlington branch to their delegate, Mrs. Ayton, as follows:—

"A representative of the National Women's Social and Political Union has visited our branch to-day and laid the facts of the position of the Union before us, and it was moved by Mrs. Sims, seconded by Mrs. Roberts, and carried unanimously, that you be instructed to take no official part in the Conference at Caxton Hall to-morrow. As a private visitor you can do as you please, but our advice to you is not to vote on any question that may come before the Conference."

The Chairman added that she thought the charges of intrigue brought against the Provisional Committee might fitly be returned. A vote was taken as to whether Mrs. Ayton should be allowed to vote as a delegate or not, 14 voting in favour, and 2 against.

The CHAIRMAN: There is only one point now left in 2A, 2B, and 2C on the agenda, viz., the co-option of three further members.

Mrs. DICE: I move that three members be co-opted, so that at any time the Committee could consist of 12, plus 3 officers, plus 3 co-opted, because I think I can foresee occasions when a specialist's opinion and knowledge might be wanted, and then it would be such a pity not to have her opinion or advice for another twelve months if Conference be not called during that time. If such a talented person should come along, for instance, somebody with good legal knowledge, if it is found that that person's advice would be required by the Committee, I think it would be unfortunate to bind ourselves down to wait another twelve months for such person.

LADY RAMSAY seconded.

The CHAIRMAN: May I here say, since this resolution is before the Conference, that every Committee has the power to bring in special advisers on special occasions, who, of course, may not vote. It is within the power of any Committee to do that, so that we could really take advantage of the genius or ability or training of any special persons by bringing them into consultation.

Mrs. SPROSON: I am very strongly opposed to the principle of co-opting

any one at all. It is entirely undemocratic; and if we admit a principle of this kind there is a possibility of extending it, and I believe in keeping such a principle entirely outside the organization. When such special advice would be helpful, of course we can always obtain it.

Miss FITZHERBERT (Battersea) asked if it would be in order to withdraw the following 2B resolution. Her branch had given her an entirely free hand in the matter, and she wished to vote against co-option. The Chairman pointed out that it fell to the ground if she did not move it.

Dr. WILKS: An emergency might arise, in which we might be very glad to have further members. Last year on one occasion most of our Committee members were in prison, and in a similar case it might be very necessary to co-opt members.

The CHAIRMAN: That contingency is met by Resolution No. 18, which provides for the Committee taking other people from the list of nominations.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I am instructed to vote against co-option. I might say, in the case of an emergency, if the whole of our Committee was put into prison, a special Conference would be called. We think that it takes the democratic control entirely out of the hands of the branches. You can always have a specialist at any meeting to give an opinion on a certain matter.

7 delegates voted in favour of co-option, and 12 against.

The CHAIRMAN: The only point now to be covered in Resolution No. 3 is the last clause.

This was moved by Miss Penny (Glasgow Western), and seconded by Miss Wilkie (Dundee).

Mrs. SELF moved the alteration to one quarter instead of one-third.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the spirit of the Glasgow Western Branch in moving this resolution was this, that all workers in the cause should be on an equal footing, whether paid or unpaid; that all should be equally eligible for election if they were thought to be suitable. You have therefore two resolutions before you in which there is only a minor point of difference.

Miss MARY SMITH (Fulham): I am instructed by my branch to vote against paid organizers being eligible for the Executive Committee. The idea is not that organizers are in any way less capable than other people of being on the Committee, but that it is unbusinesslike, and that organizers, being paid, do not feel quite independent. They might vote against a thing simply because other people were doing so, simply because they were paid.

Mrs. DESPARD: Our great difficulty on the late Committee was that members were not in London, and that when it was found necessary to bring a full Committee together, it was at great expense. Committee work is not really and truly the work of organizers.

Mrs. SPROSON: I must speak entirely against any resolution for paid organizers being on the Executive. Being paid organizers, their opinion on certain matters is sure to be biased. If we are going to have a quarter of the Committee paid organizers, and also a paid secretary, this influence is growing very strong, and I believe it has a tendency to develop the very evil with which we are now contending. I am very strongly opposed to the paid organizers having voting power, although they might sit and lend their opinion to the Committee.

Miss IRENE MILLER said that her branch felt that there was a great

danger in the possibility of too many salaried persons having votes; but they put the number at three without any regard to proportion.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN supported Miss Irene Miller.

The result of the voting on this issue was a tie (11 for, 11 against). The Chairman exercised her casting vote in favour of paid organizers being eligible for election.

The amendment that "not more than one-quarter" be substituted for "not more than one-third" was then put to the vote, and carried.

Miss IRENE MILLER proposed an amendment to limit the number to three, which was ruled out of order.

Resolution No. 4 was covered by No. 3, and therefore fell through.

The CHAIRMAN: There is only one point left in Resolution 5, that of travelling expenses.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: We feel that we ought to have Committee members from different parts of the country, not necessarily all London members. My branch object to having the whole business carried on by London members. We think we are capable of doing a little ourselves, and should like to see members from any part of England eligible for Committee, also the poor women who could not afford to pay their travelling expenses. We should then get a fairly representative Committee; London people would be able to look through provincial spectacles, and *vice versa*. We think a good deal of work has been done in London that might have been carried around the country.

Miss IRENE MILLER seconded, and this resolution was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: Resolution No. 7 has been already covered.

Mrs. SAINTY (Letchworth) moved Resolution No. 8.

Miss FITZHERBERT (Battersea) seconded, but it was lost by a large majority.

The CHAIRMAN: Resolution No. 9 has been already covered.

The Delegate from Glasgow Western not being present at the time—

Mrs. DRYSDALE proposed Resolution No. 10, and Miss Hopegood seconded.

Mrs. DRYSDALE: I think it is very important that this resolution should be carried, because in the local branches we have often very great difficulty in keeping alive. You want to have something to attract members, and if we were kept in closer touch with the National Executive Committee it could be made an occasion of special speeches and special demonstrations.

Mrs. SELF was willing to support the resolution if the words "on invitation" were inserted after the word "changed."

Mrs. DICE opposed the resolution, because she thought several branches would want the Committee at once.

Dr. WILKS supported Mrs. Dice, on the ground that people would not subscribe if all the money was to be spent on travelling expenses.

Mrs. SPROSON supported the resolution, as she considered it would be a means of economizing the money and keeping up a very lively propaganda in the country.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I was instructed to support the resolution, as our idea was that it meant that the Executive Committee could meet once in a while in Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow, instead of always in London, and it would work out about the same all round so far as expenses

were concerned. Besides, you could then have a demonstration, and all your local papers would be alive with the fact that the Executive of the Union were meeting in that place, and it would look brisk all round.

LADY RAMSAY: It seems rather an unbusinesslike thing for an executive not to meet in its own office. It entails a lot of trouble carrying about its paraphernalia, and I think that the demonstrations ought not to be by the Executive, but by another part of the Union.

Mrs. SELF withdrew her amendment, and the words "different parts of the country" were substituted for "other large cities."

In favour 15, against 17.

The Conference then adjourned from 1 to 1.45 p.m.

SECOND SESSION.

Mrs. McKEOWN: I have inquired about the matter mentioned by Mrs. Billington-Grieg about railway fares, and find that one of the ladies who wenth North was Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence herself.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not see that Mrs. McKeown's statement alters the fact that money was wasted upon that particular journey.

Mrs. SPROSON moved, and Mrs. SELF seconded Resolution No. 11, "That the National Executive Committee shall form such Sub-Committees as are found to be necessary, and shall require Reports from these bodies to be submitted at its Monthly Meeting."

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN asked if it would necessarily follow that if a sub-committee were formed, it would have to report.

The CHAIRMAN answered in the affirmative.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

Miss IRENE MILLER, on behalf of the Provisional Committee, next proposed, and Miss Abadam seconded, "That the Conference recommends the Committee to elect from their own body, with power to co-opt a Specialist, Sub-Committees for Political, Financial, Organizing, Literary, Social Work, and General Purposes."

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN protested against the principle of co-opting, against which they had already voted.

Mrs. DESPARD said that, as a general rule, if any one was co-opted on to a sub-committee, that person would have power to vote.

Miss IRENE MILLER: I think it would be rather foolish to deny the sub-committees the help of a specialist, because a great deal of time and energy might be wasted where a specialist could have given advice or an opinion which would put quite a new light upon a matter. Women with general all-round knowledge may still be very ignorant on some points.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: A sub-committee has always the power to co-opt a specialist, and I think this is a waste of time.

14 voted for the resolution, and 7 against.

The CHAIRMAN: The first part of Resolution No. 12 has already been dealt with, and I will now call upon Miss Fitzherbert to explain what is meant by appointing assistant officers.

Miss FITZHERBERT: I wish to move the resolution, putting in one or two more words, "That the Committee shall be empowered to appoint such assistant officers, paid or unpaid, as subsequent occasion may demand."

It simply gives the Committee the power to appoint officers; I do not mean they should appoint them on to the Committee, but appoint them for service.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

It was decided to take Resolution No. 14 before No. 13, "That special work be given to a Sub-Committee appointed by the Executive to take the place of the Emergency Committee, such Committee to dissolve when the special work is completed."

In moving this resolution—

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN said that its object was to keep everything in the hands of the National Executive Committee.

Miss IRENE MILLER seconded, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 13 fell to the ground in consequence of No. 14 having been carried.

Resolution No. 15 was covered by No. 11.

Mrs. GRANT proposed, and Miss HOPEGOOD seconded Resolution No. 16, "That the National Committee shall not initiate any new policy between one Conference and the next, without first obtaining the sanction of the majority of the Branches."

Miss ABADAM: As this resolution runs it evidently means that the National Committee, with the sanction of the majority of the branches, can initiate a new policy between one Conference and the next. I submit that this is a highly imprudent course to take. The policy of the Union would be at the mercy of the majority, ascertained by referendum, and not by discussion in common. I think nothing but a Conference itself should have the power to alter our policy. I therefore move that the words "without first obtaining the sanction of the majority of the branches" be deleted.

This amendment was seconded.

Mrs. DESPARD thought there might be an absolute necessity for a change of policy between one conference and another, and that the words "without calling a special Conference" would make it clearer.

The CHAIRMAN: It is within the spirit of the general resolution, which does not say an "annual" conference.

20 delegates voted in favour of Miss Abadam's amendment, 2 against.

Mrs. DICE then proposed Resolution No. 17, "That 7 members of the National Committee shall form a quorum."

Mrs. DRYSDALE seconded.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN's amendment that "5" be substituted for "7" fell to the ground, as it received no support.

Miss IRENE MILLER thought it very important that it should be arranged that the majority of the quorum should not be paid officials, and moved an amendment to that effect. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN agreed with the principle that the number of paid people should be limited.

Miss MILLER then moved the addition of the words "and that two only be paid officials."

Mrs. DICE supported the amendment, which was seconded by Miss ABADAM. 16 for 3 against.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 18, "That in case of

a vacancy occurring on the Executive between the Conferences, the unsuccessful candidate receiving the largest number of votes at the preceding Conference shall fill the vacancy."

Mrs. SPROSON seconded.

Miss FITZHERBERT moved an amendment that the words "temporary or permanent amongst the members of the National Committee" be inserted after the word "vacancy" in the first line, and that the words "the member so appointed shall retire in the case of a temporary vacancy on the return of the permanent member" be added. She said it was perfectly obvious that some provision must be made against such emergencies as the one last year, when a large number of the Committee went to prison.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN accepted the amendment, which was carried unanimously.

Miss FITZHERBERT further moved that "In the case of a vacancy, temporary or permanent, occurring among the officials of the National Executive Committee the vacancy shall be filled from the elected members of the Committee, the place thus made vacant being filled up by the application of the last resolution." This was carried unanimously.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: We move this resolution:—"That the separate duties of Central Organizing Secretary and the General Secretary be clearly and particularly defined at the first meeting of the new Executive," because there has been such a lot of confusion about the Secretaries. The letters that have been sent to our branch have been signed by about six people, and if the duties of the Secretaries were clearly defined, things would not get so mixed up.

Mrs. SELF suggested that it might be left to the Committee, but the Chairman pointed out that it was merely a recommendation to them.

Mrs. DICE: Madam Chairman, can it be done?

The CHAIRMAN: My private opinion is that it can be done with a certain exercise of forethought.

Mrs. SELF moved an amendment that it be left to the Committee.

Dr. WILKS seconded.

The amendment was lost.

Mrs. SAINTY moved Resolution No. 20, which fell to the ground because there was no seconder. The Chairman pointed out that the Committee already had the power to elect an Assistant Secretary.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.

The CHAIRMAN: The Standing Orders Committee advise taking the Election of Officers at this point. Mrs. How Martyn and Mrs. Despard are respectively elected Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, as they are the only nominations. (Applause.)

Mrs. HOW MARTYN nominated Mrs. Billington-Greig as Organizing Secretary, and amidst great applause Mrs. Despard declared the election.

Mrs. BILLINGTON-GREIG stated that she refused to accept the position as *paid* Organizer.

The election of the Committee was taken by ballot, the result being—

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Mrs. Coates-Hansen. | Mrs. Drysdale. | Mrs. Dice. |
| Miss Hodgson. | Mrs. Bell (Edinburgh). | Miss Abadam. |
| Miss Irene Miller. | Mrs. Sanderson (Forfar). | Mrs. Holmes. |
| Miss Fitzherbert. | Mrs. Winton-Evans. | Miss Mansell. |

RESOLUTIONS (continued).—BRANCHES.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 21, "That branches having paid their affiliation fees shall be entitled to representation at the Conference." She said it merely ensured their right to representation when the affiliation fees were paid.

Miss HODGSON seconded the Resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 22, "That the minimum affiliation fee be 5s. yearly per branch." She said that was a reasonable amount to ask, particularly from branches which were poor, or not numerically strong.

Mrs. DICE seconded.

Mrs. AYTON moved that 2d. per year per member be substituted, as it would bring in more money.

The amendment was not seconded, and fell to the ground.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 23, "That the basis of representation be one delegate for any number up to 50 members, after which an extra delegate will be allowed for the major part of 50." She said their idea was to give a basis of representation, and any branch, however small, had a right to be represented if they had paid their affiliation fee.

Mrs. HOLMES seconded.

Mrs. SELF moved that the words "from twelve" be inserted after the word "number," and that in the latter portion of Resolution No. 24 "an affiliation fee being paid for each delegate" be added after the word "50."

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN accepted the amendment. 15 for, 4 against.

Dr. WILKS moved Resolution No. 25, "That a Branch formed within six months of the Annual Conference may send a delegate to the Conference, but that such delegate shall have no voting power," which fell to the ground, as it was not seconded.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 26, "That no Branch shall be represented at any Conference which has not been in existence for three months prior to such Conference," which was duly seconded.

Mrs. SAINTY moved an amendment that any branch, having paid the affiliation fee, no matter how long it had been in existence, might send a delegate to the Conference. "It does not take three months, or even a week, to convince a woman that she wants a vote."

The CHAIRMAN: That is practically *status quo*.

Miss WILKIE seconded Mrs. Sainty's amendment, 9 delegates voting in favour, and 12 against. The original Resolution was carried.

Dr. WILKS proposed Resolution No. 27, "That if a Member of the Union belong to two branches she shall only vote with one branch on any matter which affects the Union at large." She said this had been found very inconvenient in their own branch, as some of their members were on the Committee at Walthamstow as well as at Hackney, and it was very unfair that they should vote in two branches.

Miss MARY SMITH seconded.

Miss ABADAM said that they ought to be more thorough in their opposition to plural voting, and moved that the words "on any matter which affects the Union at large" be deleted, so as to secure no plural voting, even on matters of detail.

Dr. WILKS thought it would be a great mistake, as these particular members had been most energetic in both branches. In any branch matter they should have a vote.

Mrs. DICE seconded the amendment.

Mrs. DESPARD said she could see Dr. Wilks's point, and she did not consider that the amendment would at all help in the matter.

Miss ABADAM thought it would be very difficult to settle which would be a large or a small matter.

Dr. WILKS: Things that concern the branch alone would be small matters.

Miss HODGSON: Who would decide the question as to whether members should vote or not? Would it be put to the meeting on any special occasion?

Dr. WILKS: It would be decided by the local Committees.

Mrs. SELF: I think one could be a member of two branches, an honorary member of one and a voting member of another.

The original resolution was carried.

Miss MARY SMITH moved Resolution No. 28, "That a report of the work done in all branches, including work done by Organizers, be given in detail." She said her branch did not consider that the last Annual Report was full enough. They knew that Organizers who were supposed to do work for the Fulham branch did not do it, and did not even attend.

Mrs. SWINEY seconded the resolution.

Miss IRENE MILLER: If these details were given in the Annual Report it would not meet the difficulty.

Miss MARY SMITH said that Fulham meant that Organizers should submit their reports to the National Executive Committee, and that later on some account of such report should be given in the Annual Report.

The CHAIRMAN said that no question of the failure in duty should be introduced.

Mrs. SPROSON: It seems to me that our friend is trying to bring before the notice of the Conference the fact that certain Organizers have not done what they should have done, and have not made a report accordingly, but I take it that the branches should report the Organizers to the General Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is a matter between the branches and the Executive Committee, and not for the Conference, at present, at all events. It is rather a pity that even our justifiable criticism should be given voice to in such a way as to increase unpleasantness. To my certain knowledge most people here are very great admirers of most of the Organizers, openly as well as privately, right through their careers, so that I feel it would be best not to let the criticism of one Organizer pass without some statement being made. In such cases as the one mentioned a report should be made by the branch to the National Executive Committee.

The Resolution was carried unanimously.

Mrs. SELF moved Resolution No. 29, "That branches be grouped, and such groups elect a member to the National Council." She said if

several branches were grouped into sections, they could nominate any one for the Committee, and vote amongst themselves who that should be. This would give the branches better representation than at present.

Miss MARY SMITH seconded.

The CHAIRMAN said that she did not think the Resolution was understood by the branches to whom it was sent. She thought it would be best to divide it into two parts. That the first part of the Resolution might be recommended to the Executive Committee, that they should undertake to try and bring about the federation of the branches. With regard to the second part, that could only remain a pious Resolution until the first was carried out; it was rather premature. Speaking as a Scottish member, she was strongly in favour of the formation of federations. Very much better work had been done in Scotland since the Federation had been formed in May.

The Resolution was then put, "That a recommendation be sent to the National Executive Committee from this Conference to group the branches wherever possible." Carried unanimously.

The remainder of No. 29 was dropped until it should come into the region of practical politics.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 30, "That the ultimate power of the Union be the Annual Conference."

This was seconded by Mrs. Self, and carried unanimously.

CONFERENCE.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: I am instructed to move Resolution No. 31, "That the Annual Conference be held at a more convenient time of the year, say a generally accepted holiday, as Easter, Whitsuntide, or Christmas. Also that the place of meeting be chosen from year to year by the delegates at the Conference," because many women like very much to be delegates from their branches, but they cannot come, because they may have work which makes it impossible for them to leave at ordinary times. If we held Conference at some holiday time they might have a chance. At present we limit our choice of delegates to those who have free time, and it is rather bad to limit the choice. Then also we think that we ought not always to meet in London; why not in Scotland, or on the West Coast?

Miss CAIRNS seconded.

Miss WILKIE: It was suggested in Dundee that the Conference might be held in February or March, about the time of the opening of Parliament.

Mrs. SELF suggested Easter.

The CHAIRMAN: There is one practical objection to Easter. Five big bodies now hold their annual conferences at Easter, and if we add another to that number, we are likely to get no show at all in the newspapers.

Miss IRENE MILLER: The question of the Press is a very strong reason for having the Conference generally in London. What would create a very great stir in the provinces only occupies half an inch in the London papers, whereas anything that appears in the London papers is copied all over the country by the provincial newspapers.

Mrs. HOLMES supported the Amendment that it should be just after the opening of Parliament.

Miss IRENE MILLER suggested just before the opening, because some ladies might like to stay up with ulterior motives. (Laughter and cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN: For our special purposes it will be best to have our machinery in working order directly Parliament is open.

Mrs. SPROSON suggested that the original mover should withdraw in favour of February, instead of after Parliament opened.

Mrs. DESPARD: I cannot help thinking that January is the best time. It is the beginning of the year, it gives a little time before Parliament opens, it is a very good landmark, and we should have the winter to think over things.

Mrs. DRYSDALE: It seems to me a very good time would be the opening of Parliament, so that women should, if possible, be present at the King's Speech, and hear it, that is, if they are allowed; and Miss Miller's suggestion that we should be on the spot ready to take action would also be a good idea, so that one railway fare would serve two or three purposes.

The CHAIRMAN asked the delegates to vote on Miss Wilkie's amendment, "That the Conference be held immediately after the opening of the Houses of Parliament—that is, in February or March of each year.

The Amendment was lost—9 for, 12 against.

Mrs. SPROSON moved a further Amendment that the Conference be held in February, in order that they might promote some of that propaganda in connexion with Parliament as they had done in the past.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: I should like to point out that the calling of the Annual Conference involves a very great deal of work, and that any demonstration at the House of Commons also involves a great deal of work, and that the Committee has a double lot of work to do, which means that neither piece would be carried out as well as if they had followed one another.

The Amendment to February fell to the ground, as no one voted.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN: Why should we change it at all? We in Middlesbrough only suggested the change to get it at a holiday time, otherwise we were quite satisfied with October.

The CHAIRMAN: A great many branches are not.

13 voted in favour of January for the Annual Conference, and 6 against.

Miss IRENE MILLER proposed as an Amendment to the second part of Resolution No. 31, "That every third year the Conference meet somewhere out of London."

Mrs. HOLMES seconded.

The Amendment was lost, 11 voting in favour and 12 against. The original Resolution was therefore carried.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 33, "That special Conferences may be called if a certain percentage of the branches desire it (the percentage to be decided by Conference). She said this was merely to give the branches a chance to call a special Conference in case of emergency, such as that they had just passed through.

Mrs. SELF seconded. Carried unanimously.

It was suggested that the percentage be two-thirds. This was seconded by Mrs. Holmes.

Mrs. SPROSON: One-half.

Dr. WILKS : One-third.

Mrs. SPROSON'S Amendment was defeated—9 in favour, 13 against.

Dr. WILKS'S Amendment was seconded by Mrs. Dice, supported by Miss Fitzherbert, and carried, 12 for, 6 against.

It was decided to take Resolution No. 43 at this point, as it dealt with the question of the Conference.

Mrs. DRYSDALE moved "That a special Conference be called early in 1908."

The CHAIRMAN : Under the circumstances, as we have decided that the Annual Conference shall meet in January, this point need not be pressed. In any case, the next Annual Conference will meet in January. I would like to say that our reason for asking for a special Conference early in 1908 was because many points regarding our name, funds, and status generally, cannot be fully decided by this Conference, and that any delay with regard to these matters would be to some extent dangerous. Meanwhile, any matters that arise could perhaps be decided by a referendum to the branches.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 34, "The branches shall pay their delegates' expenses to the Conference, but that branches which cannot afford to send a delegate may combine with another branch, and one delegate may represent two or more branches, voting separately for each Branch according to instructions."

Mrs. DICE seconded.

Miss PENNY suggested that, in reference to the first part of the resolution, the expenses of the delegates be pooled, as is the custom in Scotland.

Miss CAIRNS seconded.

In favour of the Amendment for pooling the railway expenses 15, 3 against.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN : I should like to propose as an Amendment to the second part of the Resolution that a branch have power to select any other member of the Union as a delegate. From Glasgow, several people have come down, only two of them as delegates. One of these members might have been chosen by a poor branch not far off. For instance, Dumbarton has not sent a delegate; it is too poor. It might have chosen a member of the Glasgow branch and sent her as a delegate to this Conference. That member would, of course, have gone to Dumbarton to receive instructions.

Miss FITZHERBERT seconded. The Amendment was carried.

Nominations were then asked for the place of meeting of the next Conference, and London was selected, 12 delegates voting in its favour.

MEMBERSHIP.

Miss PENNY moved Resolution No. 35, "That the terms of membership shall remain unchanged."

The CHAIRMAN : Miss Penny, representing the Glasgow Western branch, was, I believe, desired to say in moving this Resolution, "That the terms of membership shall remain unchanged," that her branch is of opinion that the change suggested was not necessary, that the old clause of membership was strong enough to keep us independent, and wide enough

to admit every kind of woman to our ranks, and that such being the case there is no need for strengthening it, or altering it in any way.

Miss HOPEGOOD seconded.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN : We objected very strongly to the added clause of the Clement's Inn people. We did not think it businesslike at all, and if we had to have an amended clause, we prefer to have the one here : "Women of all shades of political opinion are eligible for membership who approve the objects and methods of the Union, and are prepared to act independently of any political party which declines to give the enfranchisement of women the first place on its programme." We think the time may come when we shall have to get the pledge of a political party. If we get that, we shall have the first step towards what we want. If we get an actual pledge, and practically an election cry, that is a big step.

Mrs. DESPARD : I second it from this particular point of view. We know perfectly well that, as women, we cannot get votes by ourselves. We ought to offer a *quid pro quo*. It appears to me that this is a statesman-like thing to do. We ask them to support us. Over and over again we have been practically cheated by candidates who have given us their pledges, and who have practically declined to carry them out at all so far as Women's Suffrage is concerned. We now ask them for something much stronger. We will act as we have done for some time past, independently of any political party, except one, and that the one that gives us a clear pledge. We shall not attain our object until some political party gives our enfranchisement the first place on its programme. Therefore, I am most heartily in favour of this amendment.

Mrs. HOW-MARTYN : I do think that when that happy day arrives we might call a very special Conference to consider it. Meanwhile, I should like to point out that the clause, as we have had it previously, has worked exceedingly well. I also strongly support the clause as it was for this reason, that it does open the door wide to receive women of all shades of political opinion. When we have those women in our ranks, then our work begins, especially the work in the branches. We have to educate these women to take a firmer and firmer attitude upon this question of political independence. In the local branch, in which I have had experience, we have had women who have come in and have been in the habit of working for political parties. We have not insisted very much at first, because it has been left open, that as individuals they were free. I am glad to be able to state that after a year's education in the branch, several of these would absolutely refuse to work for any candidate at all, until either some party makes it an electioneering cry or until women are enfranchised. As the terms of membership clause has worked so well in the past, I do hope that the delegates will consider very seriously before they make any change in it.

Mrs. SPROSON desired to review the claims of each of the political parties to the support of women, but the Chairman ruled her out of order.

Mrs. DICE : Madame President, I rise in support of the Resolution that the terms of membership shall remain unchanged. Acting independently of any political party is very loose. People can act independently in ever so many ways.

Miss IRENE MILLER supported Mrs. How Martyn's opinions.

The CHAIRMAN : I appeal very strongly to every one present to recognize that our old attitude, the attitude of independence, plainly and simply

stated, is the broadest basis. It has been possible under it for us to become recognized as an independent political union, and for women strongly differing in political thought to unite in action. If we introduce any further matter into our membership clause, about supporting a political party under given conditions, which would tend to throw our weight before this contingency happens towards any particular party, I am very much afraid that it would be an immediate cause of disunion. I do plead for the old clause, as I would plead for a basis of compromise, which is also a basis of independence. The miracle may happen some day. When it does happen, surely it is within our power to say, "Now we can act in regard to this miracle." Therefore I feel we would be going out of our way to hold out the hand which has been held out too often, as we shall do if we make this change at the present time. We must make the world recognize our independence, and having done so, when we can say, here is a party that is willing to make our enfranchisement its chief reform, that is willing to fight for it in season and out of season, that is willing to stake all its reputation on our cause, then we can make conditions, and work for the party that fulfils them; but not until such a time arrives can we act. Let us not say anything to make men think we can be bought, until they have taken the great step that is absolutely necessary. (Applause.)

Mrs. DRYSDALE: I think in some cases Resolution No. 36 has been misunderstood, at least, the full significance of it. We should be in a most ridiculous position should any party offer to give us the vote, and, as Mrs. Billington-Greig expressed it just now, to fight for it at all times, and to hold it as their first care. Of course we have got to get it from these men. Some time we shall have to be in that position. If we put it now it may give the inference that we are ready to be bought more cheaply than we are. Our price will be very high; it won't be a mere promise from a paltry party. If we pass this Resolution we should give them the idea that if they say "Oh, yes! we will give you the vote," we shall be ready to support them.

Mrs. DESPARD: I have been thinking for weeks over this, and it seems to me that it is absolutely as definite as anything could possibly be. What do we mean by a political party giving a particular measure the first place in their political programme? Not even a first place, but *the* first place? It means that they are going to get that out of the way before anything else is done. That is exactly what we are asking, and if a political party is ready to do that for us, we certainly ought not to oppose any member of that political party who gives us that pledge.

Mrs. DRYSDALE: Even then, need the matter be stated? They know what we want; is it for us to do the suggesting?

Miss ABADAM: The whole point seems to me to turn on this—What party? (Cries of No, no.) Is the party which gives the pledge to be an old party of standing?

The CHAIRMAN: I rule the introduction of that point out of order. No such references can be permitted in an independent society of women.

The Amendment, moved by Mrs. Coates-Hansen, and seconded by Mrs. Despard, was defeated, 3 for, 19 against.

The CHAIRMAN announced that a Special Conference would meet at Caxton Hall at 10.30 on Sunday morning for recommendations and matter that could not be introduced at the Conference proper. In the afternoon, at 3 o'clock, Mrs. Despard expected all the delegates, their hostesses, and

all the provincial visitors at her house at Nine Elms. Members of the new Committee were included in the invitation.

In view of Resolution No. 35 having been carried, Resolutions Nos. 37 and 38 were ruled out of order.

Miss ABADAM: I have the honour to propose to this Conference Resolution No. 39, which stands in the name of the late Provisional Committee, "That the Committee shall have the right to suspend any member or members who, after due defence, shall be considered by the Committee in full Session to have acted in a manner at variance with, or prejudicial to, the objects and methods of the Union. That the matter shall be brought before the Annual Conference next following, which alone shall, by a majority, have power to expel such member or members from the Union." This is a measure of precaution and prudence, and even perhaps of protection, which it is as well to have on the constitution in case of necessity, as it is, perhaps, to have brandy in the house in case of sickness. Most societies, I believe, have something of the sort to safeguard their objects, and if this clause had existed, I am inclined to think that the events of September could hardly have taken place, or if they had taken place, they would have been robbed of the least shadow of excuse.

Mrs. SWINEY seconded the Resolution.

The CHAIRMAN: One of our considerations in putting this Resolution on the agenda was that one emphasized by Miss Abadam, that the action of the Clement's Inn section in entirely sweeping away the rights of the branches is said to be due to dangers which existed because of unscrupulous people who were misusing the ordinary democratic machinery. Such a Resolution as this would enable the Committee to bring unscrupulous members to account, while the branches would still retain all their rights, and the members concerned would be entitled to the fullest defence. If the charges brought forward by the Clement's Inn people were true, they should have adopted the course of bringing such a Resolution as this to the Conference.

Mrs. DICE: I should like to support the Resolution. Our position of practical politicians makes it absolutely necessary, and then it is so safe for the individual member. I do not think we can have too many safe clauses in our constitution.

A DELEGATE: What would be considered sufficient to bring one up for censure? Can any one give an instance?

The CHAIRMAN: I should think that if any single person in the Union were really guilty of trying to spread unfair, untrue, or unproved assertions against another member, that would be a sufficient excuse for censure; any attempt to split up the Union upon personal issues, any attempt to sell the Union to a particular political body, anything that would be hurtful to the spirit of the branches.

Mrs. SPROSON: I should like to add after the words "due defence," "and the member has been given an opportunity of personally appearing before the Committee."

The CHAIRMAN: That is practically included.

Mrs. SPROSON: Would not this clause have a restraining hand upon the present position of the Clement's Inn people?

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that nothing whatever would have a restraining hand upon the Clement's Inn people!

Mrs. SPROSON : I hope the delegates will insist that the person shall be entitled to make their defence in person before the Committee.

The insertion of the words "in person" after "due defence" was accepted by Miss Abadam, and the Resolution was carried with one dissentient.

A DELEGATE : What is to be the position of individual members such as Mrs. Willson, whose branch has sided with the other party? Can they join as individuals, or must they form a branch?

The CHAIRMAN : We have a certain number of members who join at headquarters as unattached members, but we should strongly advise that they get to work at once to form new branches.

BALANCE SHEET.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN : I beg to move Resolution No. 40, "That in order to meet the complications which have arisen through the issuing of the balance-sheet at a time before the Conference meets, the next balance-sheet be issued covering the period from commencing the Union to date of Conference." This Resolution was proposed really when we were hoping to have a full Conference at Clement's Inn. We in Middlesbrough objected very much indeed to the issuing of that balance-sheet and report in May without referring to the branches. No balance-sheet should ever be passed and become public property until it has got the mark of the branches upon it, and we were simply horrified to find the balance-sheet issued without any opportunity of discussing it. There were inaccuracies in that balance-sheet, which, had it been brought before our branch, would have been corrected, and probably other branches are in the same position. All we want is that a full and complete balance-sheet and statement of accounts should be given at the next Conference, as it was impossible to do at this Conference for some reason or other. I wrote several times to the Treasurer, and could get no satisfaction; therefore I am instructed to move this Resolution.

The CHAIRMAN : I must reiterate the fact that we have no financial records, reports, or materials. They have been denied us. Even if we wanted to make a balance-sheet and report from the commencement until now, we have not got the materials to do this. Had these papers been available I should have been strongly in favour of it.

The Resolution fell to the ground, as it was not seconded.

SPECIAL.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved Resolution No. 41, "That the Conference demand that the seceding members of the Committee now occupying 4, Clement's Inn, and holding all moneys, accounts, books, receipts, statements, &c., of the Union, hand the same over to the duly elected Committee of the Union."

Mrs. SPROSON, in seconding the Resolution, said : It is a very serious thing for any individual, or any section of individuals, to put out their hand and monopolize the whole of the machinery of an organization, and while I have the highest regard for the work and the good qualities of the people

who have lately taken this course, I do not believe in taking a mitigating position at all. If we have to command respect in the country, if we have to enter the sphere of practical politics, we must prove ourselves practical business women and practical politicians. In the case of one or two individual members, perhaps because they have contributed a certain amount of work or a certain amount of money beyond the measure of the ordinary member, it is not to be considered for a moment that because they are able to do that they should have undue influence over the other members. I hope that this Conference will be very solid in standing up for its rights and its property. Even if a person has given almost the whole of the funds, even if a person is the founder of an organization, those facts do not alter the position in relation to the organization, and I hope that this will not be lost sight of, and so long as any ordinary member has contributed to her organization, she has an equal share in the rights of that organization with those who may have contributed thousands of pounds or years of labour. Some people who have splendid abilities are capable of making a first false step and of making other mistakes to back up the first false step.

Miss MILLER : I am authorized by the Central Branch to make a proposal that arbitration with Clement's Inn be sought. They think that we should keep the peace at any price if it is possible, that it would be the best thing for the women's cause, and that no stone should be left unturned. If the matter could be submitted to arbitration it would be better than going to law.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN said it was very unfortunate that there was no balance-sheet produced at the Conference, as it was only asking for their due right.

The CHAIRMAN said the Resolution was asking for much more than a balance-sheet.

Mrs. HOLMES : The Croydon Branch are very anxious that a correct balance-sheet should be published to place us right with the public. Could not some compromise be effected, that we approach the Committee sitting at Clement's Inn, and ask them, or legally compel them, to hand us over an account of the moneys and of the way in which they have been spent, so that we can have our balance-sheet? Would it not be possible to take that action without going to the full length of the Resolution.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that they would be perfectly willing to take the matter of accounts only, and leave all further points about properties and moneys alone.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN said that a statement of the spending of the money and the books should be submitted to the newly elected Committee of the Union. (Applause.)

Miss FITZHERBERT : I think we ought to consider one point, and that is, what action we are prepared to take, if after having demanded these things, they are refused. If we are not prepared to take legal steps, then I think we put ourselves in rather a weak position.

Miss WOODLOCK : May I ask the cost of legal proceedings, and if the expenses for same would come out of the funds? I want to know if it is right to spend money which is given for this great, this noble movement, to put it into the hands and pockets of legal gentlemen. Never mind so much about the legal rights, but what are the moral rights?

The CHAIRMAN : I believe we have been informed that it would cost us at least 200*l.* Where it should come from would have to be decided by the Conference, and a special fund could be raised if necessary. As to whether there is to be legal action, that also has to be decided by the Conference.

A DELEGATE : I should strongly advise my branch against legal action, because my branch is a poor one.

Miss WILKIE : The Dundee branch is very much opposed to legal action being taken, and considers that it would do the cause incalculable harm.

Mrs. SWINEY : I consider that it certainly would do the cause a great deal of harm for us to go to litigation on this subject. In the first place, taking the most practical view, if it costs us 200*l.* to get back nothing, I do not see that we further our object at all from a financial point of view. Another point of grave importance is that, to put before the Press (which is already scurrilous, and misrepresents everything that is done by the Women Suffragists) another handle, would be a great mistake. We, if our cause is right—and I think we can say that it is—if it is just, the financial help will come to us. Our own constitution will keep us out of the mistakes that have been, perhaps inadvertently, made in the previous organization, and all we have to do now, in my opinion, is to let the matter drop as to the balance of what has been paid.

The CHAIRMAN : I will read the draft that I have written out, "That this Conference of the Women's Social and Political Union asserts its absolute right to the name, funds, property, and literature now held by the National Women's Social and Political Union at Clement's Inn ; but in view of the fact that it would harm the women's movement to waste time and money in litigation, it is resolved to take no legal steps to make good its claim, but asks for a statement of accounts in order that a balance-sheet can be prepared."

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN suggested asking for a statement of accounts.

Mrs. SPROSON : I think it is a great mistake to recognize a Committee at Clement's Inn.

The CHAIRMAN : We don't admit them as a Committee. We only call them by the name they call themselves, and we are not a registered society.

A DELEGATE : I should like to suggest that we might be placed in rather a curious position, perhaps a weakened position, before the country if we ask for these moneys and things, if the people at Clement's Inn refuse to give them to us. I should suggest that we merely ask for a balance-sheet, and leave the money and things just as they are. We should appeal to the world as a much stronger force if we take up the moral attitude.

Miss PENNY moved the Amendment suggested by the Chairman, and Mrs. Dice seconded.

The CHAIRMAN : I believe this compromise, fellow delegates, is the most dignified, and at the same time the most charitable course that we can take.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN said that her branch would be quite willing to accept, as they only wanted a balance-sheet.

Mrs. HOLMES also intimated her willingness to accept it.

Mrs. DRYSDALE proposed that the word "demand" be substituted

for "ask," but the Chairman pointed out that the Amendment had become a substantive Resolution.

The CHAIRMAN : Will any one support Miss Miller's suggestion that we divide by arbitration ?

Mrs. AYTON seconded.

Mrs. SPROSON : I should like to ask Miss Miller if she is sure that there is any property to divide.

Miss MILLER said that there was literature, &c., that would be worth having.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee might be empowered to write to the Clement's Inn section for these properties.

Those in favour of the Amendment for arbitration for a division of property, 8.

Those in favour of stating the right of this Union to the goods, name, moneys, &c., but refraining from legal action, yet demanding a statement of accounts, 16.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that there was still a further point to consider, that of the name of the Union, and asked the Secretary to state the legal position as to this.

Mrs. HOW MARTYN : The lawyer said that anybody could use the name Women's Social and Political Union, that he himself could, if he liked, carry on his business under that name, because we are neither a trade union, nor a friendly society, nor a registered body in any way, and that legal action could only be taken if we used it to obtain money fraudulently. He also said that the other body, by putting "National" before it, had completely altered it for all practical purposes, and he used as an illustration the Constitutional Club and the Junior Constitutional Club. The point for this Conference to consider is whether this distinction is sufficient for practical purposes and for the public. If we are appealing for funds, we don't want them to go to the "National," and I don't suppose they want theirs to come to us. Is the distinction sufficient for us to carry on our work in a satisfactory manner ?

Mrs. DRYSDALE thought that as the Conference was proposed to be held in January, it would give two and a half months to see how it worked, and as they fought so hard to keep the name, it seemed that their very dignity depended upon keeping the name, at any rate for the present.

Miss MILLER suggested that the name be changed almost immediately, as it was almost impossible that the public should distinguish between the Women's Social and Political Union and the National Women's Social and Political Union, and any work done by the W.S.P.U. would be put down to the credit of the N.W.S.P.U.

Mrs. DRYSDALE said that she did not think it possible to go on under the same name, as it was, rightly or wrongly, bound up with the name of Pankhurst, and money intended for the Union would be sent to Clement's Inn.

The CHAIRMAN : The name cannot be changed here. You can only, as delegates, recommend to the branches that the name be changed. All that we can do is to pass a Resolution, if we think it is necessary, saying that we think it advisable that the name should be changed, and asking the Executive to send a referendum to the branches in order to change it at once.

Mrs. DESPARD : I should like to move a Resolution to the effect that

we consider it advisable that the name be changed. I foresee a hundred complications, and I do not think it would be a very good thing, apart even from the uncomfortable complications that may arise, that two societies of the same name, in open rivalry, as we shall be, should be before the world. After this miserable business has passed away, and we have been able to recover from the great pain and shock that was caused to many of us, I hope that rivalry will die away, and we will recognize that there is room for a great many societies working for the same object. We shall have our special work, and our special character, and for these and many other reasons, I hope that the name will be changed as soon as possible.

This was seconded by Mrs. SELF.

Miss HODGSON: Madame Chairman, may I ask if it is not possible that we give some ground for the suggestion that we are the seceders, that we are forming as it were a new Union, and taking a new name? We should put it on the ground that the old name has been dishonoured.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that point is really not material. If we know that we have kept to the Constitution and acted according to the principles laid down therein, we in ourselves are satisfied, and those who look beneath the surface know that we are the real body. We might make a statement to the Press that we are not the seceding body, but I do not much care which section we are, providing we feel that we are in the right.

Miss ABADAM suggested that it was possible that the Clement's Inn section would change their name again.

Miss FITZHERBERT: I feel very sore about it. I quite see the arguments against retaining the name, but I do feel that we owe something to ourselves. I myself, and I know the members of my branch feel the same, am very much attached to the name. We have done our best work under that name and it does seem very hard lines that we should have to give it up. People come to our meetings when they are advertised under our old name, and I think we shall suffer in that way. I am inclined to think that Mrs. Despard's proposal is the best. I hope that we shall not get rid of the name without thinking very seriously about it.

Mrs. AYTON suggested that it be called "Votes for Women."

Mrs. DRYSDALE drew attention to the fact that the new society called their paper *Votes for Women*, but Miss Miller said that their papers had a knack of dying before very long, so that perhaps it would not survive.

12 delegates voted in favour of the motion, 2 against.

Mrs. SWINEY pointed out that the next Conference was to be held in 1908, but that no delegate could attend unless the branch had been in existence for three months.

The CHAIRMAN thought that under the circumstances a special Resolution should be passed, as many of the minorities would be seriously affected.

Miss IRENE MILLER proposed "That, under the special circumstances, new branches be allowed to send delegates to the Conference if they have been existing for two months, on this occasion only."

Miss HODGSON thought that such new branches should have at least one member of the Union as a nucleus, in order to be eligible for representation under the special circumstances. This was accepted by Miss Miller.

The Resolution was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the Provisional Committee had put

down the Resolution No. 44, "That the Committee have power to revise the Constitution without altering its principals, objects and methods, to submit it to legal opinion, then to the branches, and lastly to next Conference," because when the lawyer saw the old Constitution he said that, while it was certainly clear on one or two of the main points, it was generally possible to run a coach and four through every second clause, and this was rather a bad thing to have said. The meaning was quite clear, but the law does not go by the meaning, but by the phraseology. Therefore, in order that not only the meaning may be clear—we are sure of that—but that the law may be satisfied as to the phraseology, we thought, after his advice, that it would be a very good thing for the constitution as amended at this Conference to be submitted to a legal man in order to have any necessary amendments in the phraseology to make it quite clear.

Mrs. SWINEY seconded.

Mrs. SPROSON: Madame President, I should be more satisfied if this clause read, "That the Committee have power to revise the phraseology of the Constitution without altering its principles."

The Resolution, as amended, was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is asked whether there will be an election of officers at the Conference in January. I take it that there will.

Mrs. SPROSON: I think that matter ought to be decided here, and understood. If we do not change the Committee at the next Conference, then that Executive will serve for 15 months.

Mrs. COATES-HANSEN moved that all the business shall be done as usual at the January Conference.

Mrs. SPROSON seconded. Carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been asked to move the next Resolution, No. 46, "This meeting urges the Government to abandon the cowardly tactics hitherto adopted in order to prevent an honest discussion of the most pressing political question of the day, that of Women's Enfranchisement, and calls upon it to retrieve its honour by giving this question a place in the King's Speech next Session." I do not think I need urge upon a gathering of Women Suffragists the necessity of sending out from this Conference some such Resolution. I do not think that we should fitly close the proceedings of a Conference like this without such a Resolution, and I am most emphatically in favour of the most strongly phrased resolution of the kind that can possibly be sent out, not only because every little additional hammering carries us further to the final end, but because of the fact that some people, knowing the lengthy time and careful thought that we are giving to our internal machinery, may perhaps fairly say, "It is going to be all machinery and no work." Therefore I am delighted to have the privilege accorded me by the Provisional Committee of moving this in their name. We want the public to recognize that this matter is urgent. Further, we want to claim its introduction into the King's Speech at the earliest possible moment. It is good politics, and every day that the people of this country hear that claim I believe it is brought a little nearer. I am fully convinced that our action to-day in a matter of this kind will have a great effect. It has been supposed quite wrongly by certain people up and down the country that we are going to be very much milder than we have been in the past. It has been supposed that we have become ladylike and constitutional. (Shame.) It has been supposed that we were prepared

to be meek and gentle, because the reporters reporting in men's newspapers were unfortunately unable to differentiate between our approval of the principles of constitutionalism in our own body and our disapproval of the unconstitutionality in the affairs of men. They think that we shall leave the fighting alone. We want to make it clear that we are fighters. (Hear, hear.) That we are protesters. (Hear, hear.) That we mean to carry on the fight with vigour. If we do that we shall have cleared the air a little in our own society and in the mind of the public. So for these internal reasons, as well as for general reasons, I have very great pleasure in moving the Resolution.

Mrs. TYSAN (Ashton-under-Lyne) seconded.

Miss IRENE MILLER: My branch wishes me to say that, while it approves of the principle, it does not approve of the force of the phraseology. It wishes to have all the ornamental additions cut away, so that it reads in a quieter and more statesmanlike manner, thus: "This meeting urges the Government to abandon the tactics hitherto adopted in order to prevent a discussion of the most pressing political question of the day, that of Women's Enfranchisement, and calls upon it to give this question a place in the King's Speech next Session."

Miss CAIRNS seconded.

Mrs. SWINEY thought that the word "unworthy" should be substituted for "cowardly."

Mrs. DICE seconded. She said, We have just been talking about keeping our dignity, but I think we lose our dignity a little over the word "cowardly." It is not the way to approach a Government. It is more likely to irritate them. I think the word "unworthy" could be substituted, and is certainly more dignified.

Mrs. DRYSDALE thought the word "cowardly" absolutely suitable, because those tactics were the only ones they did employ.

A DELEGATE: They talked out our Bill.

Mrs. SPROSON thought that the word "unworthy" and the word "cowardly" meant the same thing.

Miss IRENE MILLER said in her own private opinion they should substitute the word "degrading."

Mrs. HOW MARTYN: When we were talking about standing on our dignity, we had to do with women, not with men. Those of you who know anything about men, know that you may call a man a brute or a liar, and he does not care a bit, but call him a coward, and it makes an impression on him.

Mrs. DICE: I should like to disagree. It opens us to the charge of being called semi-hysterical.

Mrs. SAINTY (Letchworth): I should like the word "cowardly" left in. I am a very peaceful person usually, but considering the tactics adopted, especially at Manchester recently, we can call them nothing but cowardly.

Mrs. SELF supported the word "cowardly," and said that those who went with Mrs. Despard when the mounted police were turned on them would find it quite the proper word.

18 voted in favour of the original resolution, 6 against.

Mrs. DESPARD moved Resolution No. 47, "That all women present at this Conference pledge themselves to agitate with unabated vigour for those rights of citizenship which have been so long denied them." Mrs.

Nominations for Officials.

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| <i>Hon. Secretary</i> ... | Mrs. HOW MARTYN. |
| <i>Hon. Treasurer</i> ... | Mrs. DESPARD. |
| <i>President</i> ... | Mrs. DESPARD. |
| <i>Vice-President</i> ... | Miss HODGSON. |
| <i>Organizer</i> ... | Mrs. BILLINGTON-GREIG. |

Nominations for Committee.

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|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Miss ABADAM | Miss HODGSON. |
| Mrs. BILLINGTON-GREIG. | Miss HAMILTON. |
| Mrs. BELL (Edinburgh). | Mrs. HOLMES. |
| Mrs. COATES-HANSEN. | Miss IRENE MILLER. |
| Mrs. KENINGALE COOK. | Mrs. EILEEN MITCHELL. |
| Mrs. CLAYTON. | Miss MANSELL. |
| Mrs. DICE. | Miss SCRIVEN. |
| Mrs. DRYSDALE. | Mrs. SANDERSON (Forfar). |
| Mrs. DESPARD. | Mrs. WINTON EVANS. |
| Miss FITZHERBERT. | Dr. ELIZABETH WILKS. |
| Mrs. HOW MARTYN. | |

Despard said : The word on which I shall put special emphasis is the word "unabated." Do not let any one think that we are going to be so much occupied with constitution-making and red-taping that we have not plenty of vigour left to fight for our righteous cause. My own belief is that, first of all, we are going to fight with unabated vigour, and after this I believe that not only will our vigour be unabated, but greater than it has ever been before. Then the other thing to which I wish to draw your attention is that we *pledge* ourselves to do this, to work with unabated vigour in our great cause. I am very glad that such a Resolution as this should have been put at the end of the business meeting. I wonder if as many men together would have got through so much in as businesslike a manner. (Applause.) It brings us back to that which is really and truly gathering us together here, for which many of us have travelled so many miles, to which we are binding ourselves, not only votes for women, but the binding together of all womanhood with human rights.

Miss ABADAM seconded.

The CHAIRMAN : I ask that we carry this with acclamation. (Prolonged applause.)

Mrs. BILLINGTON-GREIG proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Despard, Mrs. How Martyn, and Miss Hodgson, the members of the Provisional Committee, for making it possible to continue the work of the Union, and to assert the human rights of the members through it.

This was carried unanimously, and the Conference adjourned.

Mrs. HARBORD proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, which was carried, with much applause.