



# THE INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SVFFRAGE NEWS

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### THREE SUFFRAGE VICTORIES IN EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA.

THIS month we have the pleasure of adding three new States to those advancing towards equal suffrage for men and women.

In the race between Italy and France as to which should have the honour of being the first Latin country to enfranchise women, a third competitor has intervened and carried off the palm. Spain has not figured often in the suffrage news, but has evidently been making progress below the surface, and on March 10 General Primo de Rivera published a decree granting the municipal franchise and eligibility to women heads of families and above the age of twenty-three. This will include not only widows, but single women who are owners of real estate or heads of industrial concerns.

This forms part of a comprehensive scheme of municipal reform coming into force April 1. It is calculated that 1,250,000 women will have votes.

Italy has still to wait for the fulfilment of its hopes and of the promises of Signor Mussolini, and will no doubt be spurred to fresh efforts by the Spanish success.

In Asia another victory is scored by the enfranchisement of women in Mysore, India. Mysore, which has a population of six million, is the first Indian State to give full recognition to women's rights. The constitutional reforms, including woman suffrage, were decreed by the Maharajah last autumn, and are now being brought into effect.

Under the 1919 Act the question of woman suffrage was left to the provincial legislatures, but so far only Bombay and Madras in British India have removed the sex disqualification.

Yet another triumph is that of the Union of South Africa, which has now passed a Woman Suffrage Bill, leaving the qualifications to be fixed by a Commission. Thus the last of the British self-governing Dominions, except Newfoundland, joins New Zealand, Australia, and Canada.

### THE I.W.S.A. PRESIDENT'S VISITS TO GERMANY AND FRANCE.

IT is almost impossible for me to thank, personally, the many kind friends in Germany and France who showed me such generous hospitality and allowed me to gain new impressions of the work women are doing. In both countries general elections are imminent, and this must affect women's activities for the next two months. In Germany women have been concentrating mainly on the relief of the suffering around them. I spent an afternoon in the Reichstag, and had opportunities to meet the women M.P.s, who are working indefatigably. In all the big national questions, as in specific social problems, these women are taking their full share. The coming elections seem to be dreaded by everybody. A weary and exhausted populace is a dangerous political master, and no one seems to know what the result will be. I had more time in Berlin to see social work than I had in Paris, where the Board meetings were my main duty.

So much is heard of outside help for Germany that it is important to testify to the amount Germany is doing for herself. In Berlin the kitchens for the unemployed, and for students, the big warming halls, and the admirably run labour bureaux, gave proof of much organising ability. The children are lamentably undersized, and the old people distressingly feeble. Personally, my heart went out most to the student girls and boys, who, on hopelessly insufficient food, are trying to pass university examinations while earning money in banks, shops, as cooks, and so forth. The strain on health is intolerable. In Frankfurt, under the care of the kindly burgermaster, I saw something of the town work among children and the poor in their own homes, as well as the wonderful organisation to bring some relief to the hard-hit middle and professional classes, and I was much impressed by the businesslike scheme whereby partially disabled workers provide all cloths, utensils, boots, furniture, and so forth which the town may require to give in help to the poor or need in its institutions.



In France the lack of housing and the rising cost of living are keenly felt, and there seems a universal wish for peace and settlement. Sorely disappointed as are the women to see another general election approaching in which they cannot vote, they are taking up with the greatest enthusiasm the task of raising public interest in votes for women. I had the great pleasure of assisting at the annual conference of the suffrage societies, and heard reports from delegates from all over France. I must, indeed, congratulate the leaders on the brilliant younger women they have attracted to their ranks, and the evident change in public opinion.

It was so clear that in both countries, behind the political international difficulties, lay the great women's movement, struggling against the same wrongs, fighting for the same good; both populations suffering from fear of the other, and distracted by this from effective attack on poverty, disease, and ignorance. In so many lands women have won the vote in order to put their organised force at the disposal of their country, only to find themselves almost powerless through the effects of, or fear of, war. Hence surely the widely growing feeling that peace is the fundamental problem. M. C. ASHBY.

### WHY WOMEN WANT EQUAL GUARDIANSHIP OF CHILDREN.

Women who claim equal rights are often told that men's solicitude for their protection does much more than mere justice could ever do. Sheltered women sometimes are indifferent or even opposed to the women's movement, through their lack of experience of the suffering inflicted by the denial to women of equal civil and political rights. The following tragic case should rouse such women from their apathy, it shows more clearly than any abstract argument why women burn with a sense of injustice and claim a voice in making laws which affect their fate so desperately. The story is told by Louise van den Plas in *Le Féminisme Chrétien*: A man deserted his wife and daughter, and lived with another woman. The deserted wife, who never succeeded in securing anything like an adequate maintenance from him for herself and daughter, took work in an office and succeeded, with great effort and sacrifice, in supporting both. When, however, the girl was sixteen, the mother was reluctantly forced to take her away from school and find her employment in the large office where she herself worked. The girl was steady and hard-working, but, alas! her beauty attracted the dishonourable attentions of a male clerk, and when the girl repulsed him he attacked and half killed her. The mother, to protect her daughter, prosecuted the man, but in the Court of Justice (!) she had no status as the parent of her child. She had merely borne, educated, fed, and cared for the girl alone and unaided; the true legal parent, with full parental rights, was the deserting, defaulting father. He now claimed his right to secure for himself any money damages that might be paid, and he alone was recognised as having a voice in the case. He took no steps to defend his daughter or wife, who were viciously and wantonly attacked by the criminal assailant's counsel and were left with no spokesman to contradict his calumnies. The criminal was let off with a light sentence. Could any case show more plainly the actualities underlying women's passionate claim for equal rights, and first and foremost that a mother should enjoy equal parental rights with the father?

### WOMAN SUFFRAGE AT THE BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

Women from all the British Dominions Overseas will be flocking to London this year for the British Empire Exhibition. They will find there a special Woman Suffrage pavilion, with news and information of the women's equality movement, and ample opportunities for social intercourse and for guidance in visiting every type of educational and social institution.

### I.W.S.A.

#### Board Meeting in Paris, March 17-20.

THE meeting of the Board in Paris was, unfortunately, very poorly attended, only Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Mme. Schlumberger, and Mlle. Gourd being present. Up to the last moment Frau Lindemann and Dr. Ancona had hoped to be able to attend, but both met with unexpected passport difficulties. Mme. Schlumberger most kindly and hospitably placed her apartment at the disposal of the Board, which met, therefore, under the most delightful conditions possible. Moreover, the members of the Union Française vied with each other in entertaining the members, who greatly appreciated the charming intimacy of the "five o'clocks." The President attended the annual meeting of the Union on the 16th, and spoke at the enthusiastic public meeting held at the Lyceum in the evening.

The Board, in addition to giving consideration to various questions connected with the internal organisation of the Alliance and the means of securing further financial support, discussed the forthcoming meeting of the Presidents' Council, to which a good many of our affiliated societies have already signified their intention to send representatives. The date has been provisionally fixed for May 4, in London, and the following are some of the interesting questions put down for discussion: Study Tours for Suffragists; an International Lecture Service; and proposals for the itinerary of Mrs. Chapman Catt's forthcoming visit to Europe.

One of the most interesting points discussed by the Board was that brought forward by Frau Arenholt, chairman of the Equal Pay Committee—namely, whether it would be desirable to try and secure closer co-operation with women's industrial organisations, nationally or internationally, for the discussion of questions touching the economic position of women. Owing to the widespread divergence of views on such matters as protective legislation for women, this question is one of great importance, and the Board decided to refer it to a later meeting, asking Frau Arenholt in the meantime to submit a reasoned report dealing with it in detail. If any of our readers would care to submit their views to us it would give valuable help.

An interesting report was sent in by Miss Macmillan, chairman of the Committee on the Nationality of Married Women; and the question of what steps could usefully be taken to forward matters was discussed. A letter on this point will shortly reach all the Auxiliaries.

Miss Gourd was congratulated on having, with the help of France, disposed of practically the whole of the edition of "Le Suffrage des Femmes en Pratique." Only a few copies remain in stock, and those who wish to secure this very valuable book of reference should order it without delay.

It is hoped to make a very valuable addition to the contents of *Jus Suffragii*, in the form of lists of books of international interest to women, either because of their subject, or because they afford striking examples of the work of women writers. Each Auxiliary is to be asked to name a special correspondent who will supply periodically a brief review of such books published in her own country, and we hope that the fullest advantage will be taken of this opportunity of co-operating in our international paper.

The Board was much cheered by the news of the victory in Spain—viz., the grant of the municipal vote. The heartiest congratulations of the Alliance are offered to the Spanish women.

### CHINA.

Wuchow ladies are taking steps to start a woman's daily newspaper, which is to employ a number of women, and to advocate universal suffrage, an extension of co-education, and modern methods of housekeeping.

STRI-DIARMA.

## REPORTS FROM AUXILIARIES.

### BELGIUM.

ON February 21 a Bill was introduced in the Chamber by some deputies of the Right, giving women the provincial franchise; they already are eligible for all legislative and administrative bodies—commune, province, Chamber, and Senate.

This Bill is certain of support from all the Right and from about twenty Socialists (18 in the Chamber and 2 in the Senate), who signed, in 1921, a promise to give women the provincial franchise before the elections of 1925. A majority is certain in the Chamber, but in the Senate the anti-suffragists of both the Left parties will make a last effort to check women's rights. Since the recent Ministerial crisis negotiations have taken place between Catholics and the Liberals, who were formerly irreconcilable, and it seems likely that they will give the support necessary to pass the Bill.

LOUISE VAN DEN PLAS,  
General Secretary of the Belgian Woman  
Suffrage Federation.

### BULGARIA.

#### Work of the Bulgarian Women's Union, 1923-24.

THE Union includes 46 women's societies, with a membership of 8,000. Its first object is the attainment of full civic and political rights for women. To attain this object the following means are used:—

- (1) Propaganda journeys by members, who hold public meetings in various towns.
- (2) Opening of all occupations to women when their employment is not legally forbidden. The defence of women who have been unfairly dismissed. This year the Union succeeded in securing the appointment of a woman director of a gymnasium (high school) in Sofia; the former secretary of the Union was appointed. It has also secured the employment of women in various Ministries.
- (3) It watches and protects the rights of mothers. A Bill has been presented to the present Parliament for universal insurance to carry out the agreements of the International Labour Conference at Washington, 1919.
- (4) It makes use of women's eligibility for school commissions, and works for the appointment of women as school superintendents in various towns.
- (5) It combats prostitution in every possible way, and does a great deal for the protection of women and girls from the streets, and is establishing a home, with the necessary medical care.
- (6) It has taken steps to further the attainment of women's civil and political rights in Parliament, and has conveyed to the Narodno Sbranie (Parliament) the resolutions passed at the Women's Congress in September, 1923, in Rustchuk. These resolutions include the chief resolutions passed by the I.W.S.A. Congress at Rome.

(7) The Union made use of the Bill introduced into Parliament amending the law on solicitors (Rechtsanwälte) to claim the right of women law graduates to practise as solicitors. The official organ of the Union, *Jenski Glas*, sent an enquête to well-known lawyers, university professors, and politicians, who all supported the women's claim to act as solicitors. This inquiry was published in Nos. 7, 8, 9, and 10 of *Jenski Glas* of this year. The Minister-President, Prof. Alex. Zankow, has lately given his views on women's political rights, as follows:—

- (a) In favour of women receiving the vote for school commissions (they are already eligible).
- (b) Women should have the vote for local government bodies, but he is opposed to their having the parliamentary vote. He promises to give active support to the right of women to act as solicitors.
- (8) The Union uses its official organ, *Jenski Glas*, for propaganda and publicity for its objects. This year there are 4,500 subscribers.

As a social organisation the Union has won a high reputation, and its support is sought in all important public events. To improve women's present difficult position the Union's committee is organising home industry, providing cheaper raw material, and a shop for the sale of finished articles. The sad economic position of our country after so many wars, and the low exchange, prevented our Union from sending delegates to international congresses or carrying out other international work. The present executive committee consists of the following:—President: J. Malinova. Vice-president: Dr. B. Beron. Secretary: J. Dokova. Treasurer: P. Preslawska. Members: D. Iwanowa, K. Staliiska, K. Petrowa, E. Tschakalowa, D. Kintschukowa.

### GERMANY.

#### Women Jurors in Practice.

SOME time ago the National Council of Women asked its affiliated organisations for short reports on the experiences of women jurors and magistrates in their respective towns and cities, especially drawing their attention to the cases when women were refused seats on the jury bench, either by the State attorney or by the counsel for the defendants. As only a few reports have been sent to headquarters, no exact statistics can, of course, be given, but several significant facts will give a rather distinct picture of the situation, and of the whole matter.

First of all, goodwill and appreciation is generally shown on the side of the authorities, the justices in the chair (who used to kindly welcome the first women jurors as well as magistrates), the public prosecutors, the men jurors, and magistrates. In a few cases only—nearly all happening in the same town—it was the attorney who refused women jurors; so much the more did the counsel of the defendants make use of their veto right. This occurred so frequently in some places—e.g., in one large city in 7 out of 77 cases during one jury period—that the women were inclined to suspect systematic action of the lawyers—which, however, it was not. It was only a small anti-feminist minority who declared themselves against the women, in principle; the others either rejected certain women for certain cases—as they would, of course, do occasionally also with men jurors,—presuming their vote to be unfavorable for the defendants; or they were, as the majority evidently were, afraid of the women's rigour in general, and especially in cases of sex offence. As a remarkable fact, it may be mentioned here that, as a rule, the women really were more rigorous in their verdict than the men with regard to the guilt question, but less severe in their sentences. When asked about their special reasons for rejection, several counsel—though not obliged to give any—would bring forward the dear old, well-known, obsolete arguments—e.g., that woman only judged from her sentiment; that the proceedings probably would take a very long time; another (in a case of artificial abortion), that once he had been told by a lady that in such "nasty" cases women jurors wanted to be refused; a fourth, that he knew women too well from his manifold experience in divorce cases, etc.

In summing up the contents of the reports at our disposal, we may say: Women jurors have, almost always, been accepted in cases when their special interests as women, wives, and mothers were not concerned—e.g., in cases of falsification, bodily injury, perjury, breaches of the peace, etc.—and that they have very often been refused by counsel in cases of sexual offence, rape, and assaults on children, child murder, tried or accomplished murder or killing of women (if the defendant was a man), etc.; i.e., when, in our conviction, women were most needed on the bench. In the report of a large Central German city, a case of sexual offence, in which of four allotted women jurors not one was refused, is mentioned as a remarkable exception.



Notwithstanding all prejudicial or occasional opposition, the reports also state not only much goodwill on the side of counsel, but also many a valuable initiative and good influence of women jurors, as well as magistrates. A significant instance occurred in a small North German city, when, in the case of an unhappy deserted girl of good reputation and character, who in her despair had tried to kill her lover, the counsel for the defendant, in addressing the jurors, said: "For the first time, gentlemen, a German woman is among you. She will, I am sure, stand by her unhappy sister and lead you the right way." The jurors then withdrew, and returning after some minutes Frau T., who had been appointed foreman by her colleagues, declared, in the name of the jury, the poor girl to be *not guilty*.

At the last election of jurors and magistrates (for 1924) in December the number of women seems, at a superficial survey, to be rather greater than at the first time, in several places all the vacancies being filled with women—which satisfactory fact can well be looked upon as a general appreciation and success of the new institution in public opinion. But the development of the whole matter has in the short time of two years become somewhat *vuez jeu* already, and is only of historical importance in so far as by Government decree, under the already mentioned general "authorisation law" (Ermächtigungsgesetz), the system of penal jurisdiction (Strafprozessordnung) was altered. Mainly from economic reasons, the number of the acting jurors has been limited from 12 to 6, and the procedure will in future—the new law coming into force April 1—be about the same as hitherto it has been, only with the magistrates' courts (Schöffengerichte). The members of the jury will not, as hitherto, be allotted from the list, but will, as the magistrates always were, be appointed for the respective periods. In consequence, they cannot be refused as "prepossessed" by counsel.

It is to be hoped that this change means no restriction, but rather a progress, from our point of view, from the fact that, *e.g.*, in a large city of Central Germany, in spite of the limitation of the jurors' list by 20 per cent.—in round numbers 120 members—no women were dismissed, their names only being taken up for the magistrates' list. One may guess that no new danger for the women jurors and magistrates is in store with this new system.

MARIE STRITT.

Dresden, March 15.

#### THE UNION OF GERMAN WOMEN'S SOCIETIES.

##### Mrs. Corbett Ashby's Visit.

It is of the greatest value for the work of the Alliance that its President, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, should visit the National Auxiliaries as far as possible. The lively correspondence with London Headquarters, however welcome both for its news and suggestions, can naturally not entirely fill the place of personal contact, and journeys abroad are at present too difficult for most members of our movement. The German Women's Union gladly accepted, therefore, Mrs. Corbett Ashby's offer to visit them in March. We felt, indeed, that it was not possible to make large-scale arrangements as we were able to do even a year ago for Mrs. Chapman Catt. The period of the terrible fall in the exchange, with its injuries to German economic life, has happened since then, and its results have not yet been overcome. Moreover, the elections for the Reichstag are approaching and monopolise public interest.

In Berlin, therefore, we could only receive Mrs. Corbett Ashby in a comparatively small gathering, but we hope that we succeeded in giving her an idea of German women's work as citizens. The executive committee and the international committee of the German Lyceum Club organised a reception at which a large number of women Members of Parliament and State officials were present, some of whom had already met Mrs. Corbett Ashby in Rome; also leading professional women, and women engaged in social work, and the leaders of the former suffrage movement. Besides that,

the Berlin branch of the German Women's Union had invited the Women's Group for Social Welfare Work to a committee, at which Mrs. Corbett Ashby spoke on the development of women police in England. Her address was listened to with the greatest interest, as this is a problem which is beginning to interest the German public. We were, therefore, very grateful to Mrs. Corbett Ashby for her untiring readiness to answer questions arising out of her address, and for doing so in the German language. As Mrs. Corbett Ashby takes a keen interest in the co-operation of University women of all countries, an opportunity was arranged for her to meet them. A visit to various social institutions enabled her to see something of women's work in the present difficult conditions. Is it necessary to say that Mrs. Corbett Ashby's first visit was to the Reichstag to see the thirty-two German women members at work? There were a number of invitations for her from local branches, who would have been glad to show the President of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance their work, but unfortunately there was only time for a visit to Frankfurt-a-Main. This is one of our best and oldest local branches, and also a centre for women's local government, an excellent information bureau for all questions of women's local-government work, which the German Women's Union takes great pains to keep going. Both of them are under the direction of Frau Apolant, herself a town councillor and one of the delegates to Rome. In Frankfurt there is well-developed welfare work for the middle classes, and altogether a very active communal life, quite in keeping with the traditions of the old free town, so closely linked with German history. We are glad that Mrs. Corbett Ashby, besides seeing modern Berlin, was able to see this example of German culture. We hope that her visit to Germany will not be her last. Her understanding of our special problems and her heartfelt sympathy in the difficulties which burden us lead us to hope earnestly for a repetition of her visit as soon as possible.

DOROTHEE VON VELSEN,

President of the German Women's Union.

#### GREAT BRITAIN.

##### NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

**D**URING the last few weeks it has been more possible to form an estimate of which of the points on the National Union's programme are likely to receive the favourable support of the Labour Government and to become law.

##### Equal Franchise.

The debate on the Representation of the People Act, 1918, Amendment Bill, which, *inter alia*, provides for the extension of the franchise to women on the same terms as to men, took place on February 29. It was an illuminating debate, in that it showed the strength of the support behind Equal Franchise, though it must be admitted that one reason for the lack of opposition was that the Conservative benches were very bare. Clearly, the Government was surprised at the way things were going, and had to call in the Leader of the House to make a further statement. Unfortunately, no promise of Government time has been given—only an indication that the Government will do what it can if the Bill goes through Committee to give time for its later stages. It is unfortunate that the Bill contains proposals for further electoral reform of a contentious character; only if its promoters can be induced to drop these has it a chance of success. There is no denying that the Government's weak attitude with respect to this Bill, and its failure to introduce an equal franchise measure of its own, comes as a real disappointment.

##### Pensions for Civilian Widows with Dependent Children.

In this case, too, we have the somewhat piquant situation of a Labour Government being pressed by other parties to give more than it originally appeared prepared

to do. Here once more was a united House in favour of this much-needed reform. No definite promise of legislation this session was given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but, speaking on behalf of the Government, he accepted not only the principle but also the obligation thereby imposed on the Government towards carrying out this reform.

##### Equal Guardianship of Children.

The Cabinet has announced its intention of appointing a Committee to consult with the promoters of the Bill and others interested, to see whether an agreed measure on this subject can be devised. Until the composition of the Committee has been published it is impossible to say whether this is a step in advance or merely a device to delay the progress of the Bill.

##### A Legitimacy Bill.

A Bill to render a child legitimate on the subsequent marriage of its parents has passed most of its stages in the House of Lords, and a second Bill of the same kind has passed its second reading in the House of Commons. The Government has promised to give time to a Bill of this kind.

##### Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Bill.

This Bill has passed its second reading in the House of Commons. It is the same short Bill which was brought forward last year, and which would have passed but for the dissolution of Parliament. Its chief clauses provide that it shall no longer be necessary for a wife to leave her husband before applying for a separation order on the grounds of failure to maintain or of persistent cruelty, and that the Court may allow a maintenance order on behalf of the children to remain in cases in which the wife's has been revoked.

##### "The Disinherited Family."

This is the title of Miss Eleanor Rathbone's book on family endowment, which has now been published. (Edward Arnold and Co., 41 and 43, Maddox Street, W. 1; price 7s. 6d.). Our readers will remember her proposal to provide for children not, as now, by attempting to pay a living wage sufficient for an imaginary "normal family," but by family allowances for actually existing children, paid either by the State or by employers. The amazingly rapid development of "Family Allowances" in France, Belgium, Germany, and elsewhere is fully described. Some of the most interesting chapters of the book are those which constitute an analysis of the economic position of the mother of a family at the present time, which is bound to be of absorbing interest to all those interested in improving her position, whether by the means advocated in this book, or by any others.

##### Committee on Taxation.

Mrs. Barbara Wootton, a young economist, has been appointed to serve on the Committee set up by the Government to inquire into the National Debt and methods of taxation. EVA M. HUBBACK.

##### THE SIX POINT GROUP.

A resolution calling on the Government to pass Bills giving pensions to widowed mothers, equal rights of guardianship to married parents, and to rectify the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act this session, was passed at the Six Point Group mass meeting, on March 18, at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place.

The Viscountess Rhondda, who presided, said that this is not a minority Government as far as these reforms are concerned, as a large majority of M.P.s are pledged to support them.

Professor Winifred Cullis described how the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act has consistently failed to protect those for whose benefit it was framed, instances being the failure of peeresses to gain admittance to the House of Lords, the dismissal on marriage of women Civil servants, teachers, and health officers.

Mr. Henry Snell, M.P., and Dame May Whitty spoke on Widows' Pensions, and Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P., on Equal Guardianship.

#### THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

Our chief work continues to be on behalf of the equal enfranchisement of women and men. We have arranged a second mass meeting in London, and are urging our branches to arrange similar public meetings in Scotland, Wales, and the provinces, at which we shall call upon the Government either to give immediate facilities for the further stages of Mr. Adamson's Equal Franchise Bill, which passed its second reading in the House of Commons on February 29 last, by a majority of 216 votes, or themselves to introduce and pass through all its stages into law a simple equal franchise measure, so that women shall be able to vote at the next general election at 21 years of age, and on the same terms as men.

We are also strongly supporting Mr. Frank Briant's Bill in the House of Commons to enable peeresses in their own right to sit and vote in the House of Lords. In view of the increasing volume of industrial and social legislation affecting the interests of women and their children which is dealt with by both Houses of Parliament, we consider that women are as necessary in the House of Lords as they are in the House of Commons.

With regard to the Lunacy Commission to be appointed by the Cabinet to examine the present administration of our Lunacy Laws, we are urging that as there are more women patients than men patients in mental hospitals in this country, women should be adequately represented on that Commission; and we are specially emphasising the importance of a medical woman and a public woman who, through her election to a local governing authority, has had experience on an asylums visiting committee, being appointed to the Commission.

The Women's Freedom League is taking part in the arrangements being made for the British Overseas Committee's pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. Our seventeenth annual conference takes place in London on April 5, when resolutions dealing with the policy of our League will be considered and members elected to the national executive committee to carry out that policy for the following year.

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD.

#### A Woman Minister Receives Deputation.

In the recent suffrage debate in the South African Parliament an opponent asked, scornfully, what country had benefited from woman suffrage. Direct results from extensions of the franchise are not immediate, but in Great Britain the altered position of women for the better is more noticeable now that working women's interests are represented not only in Parliament but in the Ministry. Miss Margaret Bondfield, who is specially interested in women's unemployment, recently received a deputation from the Manchester city council asking for State assistance in training unemployed women and girls. The women councillors pointed out that up to the present money had been refused for relief work among women, except for a small scheme for resident domestic servants. They brought forward three schemes:—

- (1) For training women for home nursing of the sick, to meet the need of married women for care after childbirth and in other illnesses.
- (2) Training women, in special workrooms, to make clothes for necessitous school children, thousands of whom are suffering from lack of clothes.
- (3) Training of a corps of day domestic workers.

Miss Bondfield entered sympathetically into the point of view put before her, and promised support for the home-nursing training scheme, which would employ responsible middle aged women; also for the training of girls in making clothing, provided the city council supplied the materials; also for the training of day domestic workers. In each case maintenance during training would be provided. Here we have an object-lesson in the insight into the conditions of the workers and the needs of the home shown by women city councillors, and the support they obtain from a woman Minister, who is equally conversant with the needs and claims they represent. M. S.



**St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.**

A very successful poster parade round the House of Commons was organised by the Alliance in support of Equal Franchise, on February 29, while the matter was being debated in the House. The posters bore the well-known formula "Votes for women on the same terms as men," and were carried by members of St. Joan's Alliance and women of other organisations, with the help, too, of Dr. E. R. Morris, of New South Wales. It was quite like old times to see the women parading, and the demonstration excited great interest among the public and the press.

Our "Under 30" section asked the Prime Minister to receive a deputation on the subject of Equal Franchise. A reply was received saying "that the Government is in sympathy with the cause which you have at heart, as was explained by Mr. Clynes in the speech which he delivered in the House of Commons yesterday. In these circumstances, the Prime Minister feels that a deputation on the subject would hardly serve any useful purpose at the present stage."

What we want is not sympathy, but a Bill on the Statute Book which will enable women to vote on the same terms as men.

The annual meeting was held at Bedford College on March 15. Resolutions which were passed and sent to the new Government demanded, amongst other things, equal franchise, equal pay, and equal opportunities for men and women in the Civil Service, equal guardianship of infants, the abolition of the Solicitation Laws and of regulated prostitution in Hong-Kong and the Straits Settlements.

**THE ELECTION OF DEPUTIES AT GUERNSEY, 1924.**

By MARIE RANDALL.

EXCITEMENT at election time had never been so acute, nor vacancies as keenly contested, as at the election for eighteen deputies in January of this year for seats in the States of Guernsey, as the local parliament is called. This election takes place every three years, and all members are eligible for re-election. I was fully convinced when asked to stand that a local reporter would come and interview me, as he did others three years ago—in my own home, and by my own fire-side. But not the electors this January were far more searching in their demands. First and foremost, all candidates who really wanted to be successful had to publish a "manifesto" in the local papers, and then—much more terrifying—hire a hall and face the music. Three of us—I the only lady—hired the Masonic Hall, expecting just a few, but we were crowded out and had to hold an overflow meeting, and submit to two bombardments by anxious supporters and otherwise. One inquisitive old gentleman asked me, "What about the divorce laws?" We have none here, and not wishing to implicate myself on either side, I responded: "That, sir, I leave to the married people to decide," and made my exit, amidst a roar of laughter.

We have not yet arrived at the time when a house-to-house visitation is necessary; most probably because the districts are small, and practically everyone who has resided here for a few years knows all about the candidate—age, parentage, social position, qualifications, and views. I felt that after my Masonic Hall meeting my fate was sealed and it was useless to worry, so thoroughly enjoyed myself at the other meetings I attended. By January 31—the day of the poll—I was excited, but resigned, and you may well imagine the huge surprise I had when the Bailiff (the president of the States) appeared on the steps of the Court House just after four o'clock on February 1, and announced the result. I was second on the list of eighteen candidates, with 1,042 votes to my credit—and the first and only lady elected.

**NORTHERN IRELAND.****Belfast Women's Advisory Council.**

WITH the restoration of order and improving trade, the work of this Council steadily increases in scope and importance. The list of Bills introduced into the Northern Parliament includes two measures of especial interest to feminists—the Dangerous Drugs Bill and the Illegitimacy Bill. The Council has pressed for the former as part of its work in connection with the League of Nations Union, and welcomes the introduction of the Bill as a step towards the realisation of League proposals.

The introduction of the Illegitimacy Bill is a direct result of pressure from the Council. In Ireland, up to the present, no provision can be obtained from the father unless the mother goes into the workhouse, and only as long as she remains there. Further, if it is possible to prove loss of service on the part of parents or employer, some allowance can be obtained, but in practice this is seldom attempted. In 1911 a Bill was drafted by private persons interested in the question to remedy this grave injustice, but it was impossible to find an Irish M.P. willing to introduce the measure into the House of Commons. Much has happened during the interval, however, and the Minister for Home Affairs has now introduced a Bill providing machinery for obtaining maintenance from the putative father. Should it become law, as is confidently expected, a great advance will have been made. This measure is an instance of the reforms on which the Council is concentrating. The high infant death rate and high child sickness rates in Ireland are indications of neglect of health services and delayed social reforms. The reorganisation of health services is postponed until the promised official inquiry meets, but a steady propaganda has been carried on for ameliorating the lot of mothers and children. This is an instance of the solid pressure of feminists in all countries for the same ends. In connection with this, meetings were held in Belfast in January on the question of Moral Reform, addressed by Miss Neilans. It is felt that the new Criminal Law Amendment Act, passed by the Northern Parliament last year, only marks a stage in the growth of public opinion, and it is hoped to obtain further legislative action on the lines so often indicated by Miss Neilans.

Meetings were also held in connection with the propaganda work of the League of Nations Union, and the Women Citizens' Union is actively supporting the meeting to be addressed by Lord Cecil in April in Belfast.

At the annual meeting of this Union very satisfactory reports of progress were made. The demand for a measure granting equal suffrage to women on the lines of the proposals before the Imperial Parliament was urged upon the members of the Union. Such an organisation, representing so many professional and working women, is concerned in a special manner with this issue. Factory legislation is expected, and the young working woman, of whom there are so many in the making-up trade and in the linen mills, has a right to demand the protection of the vote before matters of vital interest to her are decided.

**HUNGARY.**

SINCE the beginning of this year, Budapest, our capital city, has no city council, and no mayors, aldermen, etc. An authority appointed by the Government, together with the councillors, is carrying on the affairs. Nevertheless, those urgent—nay, belated—Bills for city, town, and county suffrage had been postponed for an uncertain time.

In our last report we gave account of our efforts to secure women's eligibility in the city, town, and county assemblies, and of the Minister's speech in the Parliamentary Committee, in which he promised to grant women the eligibility for the city and town assemblies. The deliberations of this Committee have been adjourned ever since, to the end of January.

The National Council of Women arranged on March 1 a protest mass meeting on the subject of women's eligibility for these local assemblies. This was a first-rate demonstration, attended by a large audience. The

Countess Apponyi, as the president of the National Council, was in the chair. Prominent speakers, like the Count Albert Apponyi, Mr. Ugron, Mr. Huszár, and Mr. George Lukács, and M.P.s formerly Ministers, Miss Anna Kéty (our only woman in Parliament), and Mrs. Irma de Szirmai (vice-president of our Feministák-Egyesülete), spoke with great effect and success. The Countess Apponyi said that social work cannot be realised without the help of women, and pointed to the fact that the claim of woman suffrage, and this meeting, are equally non-party policies. Mr. Lukács proved that woman suffrage is a question of culture; that prostitution, venereal illnesses, and tuberculosis cannot be successfully remedied without the co-operation of women in political life.

Miss Kéty, M.P., said that the help of women is more important than it ever was, now that the ruins of the war and of the post-war years have to be tidied away. Women, she said, are not active so much in party politics, but endeavour to make women's work efficacious.

Mr. Huszár said that woman suffrage being the measure of social progress, he considers it as a shame that Hungary is still so backward in this respect. Women in every country are lacking in rights in proportion to the senseless egoism of men. Mr. Ugron declared that he considers the disfranchisement of women as the denial of their human dignity; that all citizens, having equal duties, must have equal rights. Mrs. Irma Szirmai stated that women want their full citizen rights to enable them to fulfil better their duties. They claim the suffrage not to give way to party passion, but because they are convinced of the necessity of the motherly influence in the affairs concerning the commonwealth.

Count Albert Apponyi, at present the Hungarian politician who enjoys the greatest esteem, made a powerful speech in vindication of women's eligibility. "When a boy," he said, "I was told never to set my watch back, as this might spoil the delicate mechanism. This is certainly the case with the natural development of humanity. There are people who would like to set back the time so that they might sleep the longer and quieter. But there is always the danger of missing the train. Woman suffrage is the result of a natural evolution, and Christianity is based on equal human rights of men and women, on the equal intangibility of the rights of both sexes. The subjection of women is not justified by Nature: it is an offence against the idea of a modern democratic state. We must prevent this backward step of disfranchising women, not to flatter them, but to ensure in the public life of our country the co-operation of the efficacy of women, which is perfectly indispensable to the community." This speech was much applauded, and gives us hope for a final good result of our struggle. Another welcome feature of this meeting was that our honoured and beloved member and comrade, Miss Anna Kéty, M.P., succeeded at last in appeasing certain reluctances which prohibited her, the member of the Social Democratic Party, from speaking in a public meeting of bourgeois women. As the ice is broken now, we may rely on her helpful co-operation.

We called again upon the Ministry of Justice to learn the Government's intentions concerning the married women's citizenship. We were told that the Peace treaty obliges Hungary to leave the law which orders that the wife follows automatically her husband's citizenship unaltered. Let us hope that conditions will change for this question, as well as for others.

We also sent a circular letter to all our members over the country to encourage them to struggle for their eligibility in all local, also country and village, assemblies, and to offer them the help of our headquarters and all our organisations.

EUGENIE MISKOLCZY MELLER.

**ITALY.****The Woman Suffrage Bill.**

ON December 7, 1923, a Bill was introduced for women's admission to the administrative franchise, but in January Parliament was dissolved. The reporter of the Bill was Philip Turati; the Bill was drafted by the Government draughtsman, Acerbo, and supported

by the Parliamentary reporter, Terzaghi. The minority of the Parliamentary Commission strongly opposed the Bill as being an offence against the principle of universal suffrage, by establishing very limited groups of privileged women (out of twelve million adult women barely one million would vote). Moreover, the Chamber voted (November 19, 1920) by 240 votes to 10 for women's suffrage on the same terms as men's. Anyhow, this Bill is now dead, and it is doubtful whether women really regret it.

There will now be new elections, with a majority secured beforehand by the Fascists. It is unlikely that woman suffrage will be granted. We shall have to go on waiting, and hope for the support of women of other lands.

N.B.—The article of which the above is a brief résumé is printed in full in French on page 111.

**TURKEY.****Discussion of Woman Suffrage in Angora Assembly.**

CONFLICTING accounts are given of the debate on the Constitutional Charter in the Grand National Assembly. Under Article 10 every Turk having completed his 18th year is entitled to vote in Parliamentary elections. One report states that "it was acknowledged that this applied to women as well." Another report states that "when the question of women's votes was raised a section of the House sympathised; nevertheless, pending women's fuller development, voting was confined to males." We await further news, but the mere fact of woman suffrage being seriously considered marks an immense advance on Turkey's previous attitude to women.

**UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.****Women's Enfranchisement Bill Passes Second Reading.**

ON February 15 the House of Assembly passed the Women's Enfranchisement Bill by a majority of six votes. The Bill has been submitted to Parliament three years in succession. The second reading was moved by General Byron. He reminded the House that the suffrage agitation had been carried on in South Africa for 33 years, but only twice had a direct vote been taken in Parliament—once in 1922, when the Bill was defeated by three votes in the Union Parliament, and again in 1923, when it was defeated by one vote. In 1918 the Senate had approved the principle, and the Assembly concurred in 1919 and 1920. General Byron urged the need of woman suffrage in view of the need for immigrants from European countries, where women now vote, and the deterrent effect on them of disenfranchisement. He also urged the pacific influence that women might be expected to exercise, and declared that if women had had the vote during the last fifty years the Great War would never have happened. The Labour Party supported the motion. The Prime Minister (General Smuts), by supporting the Bill, was a decisive factor in securing its passage. In South Africa the Colour problem overshadows all others, and whereas General Byron gave the need of strengthening white influence as a reason for woman suffrage, there is no doubt that fear of the coloured woman's vote has told strongly against it. General Smuts boldly admitted that the coloured women of the Cape would vote, and that that must be faced and measures taken to limit their vote, but that must not be a reason for debarring white women. In the other three provinces that particular difficulty does not arise, as the provinces since union have retained their previous franchise, and, except in the Cape, the native does not vote. It is useless and unfair to keep women waiting until the native problem in all its bearings is solved. General Smuts urged that it should be left to a select committee to say what the qualifications should be in all the four provinces. General Hertzog, whilst in favour of giving the vote to white women, thought it impossible if it involved the vote for coloured women: he therefore opposed. The Nationalists voted solid against the Bill, which was carried by 54 votes to 48, and sent to a select committee, with instructions to report by March 28.

M. S.



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

## Women's Organisations Oppose the So-called "Equal Rights" Amendment.

TWENTY-FIVE women, representing eleven national organisations of women, the American Federation of Labor, and various national trade unions, appeared at the hearing on the so-called "equal rights" amendment before a sub-committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 7, and gave their reasons for opposing the proposed change in the basic Federal Law. Miss Belle Sherwin, first vice-president of the National League of Women Voters, introduced the speakers, and in addition read a letter from Mrs. Harriet Taylor Upton, vice-chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Republican Committee, and one from Mrs. Emily Newell Blair, vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Both women, in carrying out their work for the major political parties, have travelled through the United States since the proposed amendment was first hinted at, and believe that there is no general demand for it on the part of women.

Mrs. Upton's letter ran: "Personally, I believe this amendment unnecessary, because States can themselves do away with objectionable statutes if they so desire. I am particularly opposed to it because it will do away with the protective laws for women which we have worked for so many years, and which have proved of such great benefit to women and their children. Eleven States have been asked to pass a like amendment, and all have refused, save one—Wisconsin. This fact in itself proves that there is no general demand on the part of the voters for this amendment.

"Women in general, and certainly all working women, with a possible exception of a few who have been misled by the interpretation placed upon it, are opposed to this amendment. . . . I feel sure that . . . you will decide not only that the proposed amendment is unnecessary, but that its enactment will withdraw protection from a group which sadly needs it."

Mrs. Blair's letter contained these words: "In my opinion, the inequalities and disabilities which this resolution seeks to remedy may be satisfactorily dealt with by the State legislatures, and this remedy is being applied, I understand, in many States. I believe, further, that it would be disastrous in many ways to nullify the protective legislation that has been enacted on behalf of women, and this is the effect, I understand, this proposed amendment would have."

Among the speakers who addressed the sub-committee in opposition to the proposed amendment were: Mrs. Samuel Henning, of Louisville, Kentucky, one of the officers of the Kentucky League of Women Voters; Miss Mary Van Kleeck, Director of Industrial Studies for the Russell Sage Foundation; and Miss Agnes Regan, secretary of the National Council of Catholic Women; Mrs. Florence Kelley, representing the National Consumers' League; Miss Agnes Nestor, legislative chairman National Women's Trade Union League; Miss Melinda Scott, American Federation of Labor; Mrs. Maud Swartz, president of the National Women's Trade Union League; Miss Rose Schneiderman, vice-president of the same league; Mrs. Edith C. Paul, American Federation of Teachers; Miss Nellie Swartz, chief of the Bureau of Women in Industry, New York State Labor Department; Mrs. Alexander Wolf, National Council of Jewish Women; Mrs. Reginald Stevenson, Girls' Friendly Society in America; Miss Lita Bayne, American Home Economics Association; Mrs. Glen Levin Swiggett, National Council of Women; Miss Anna Neary, American Federation of Labor; Miss Myrtle McAvoy, International Brotherhood of Bookbinders; Mrs. Rose Yates Forrester, Brotherhood of Railroad Clerks; and Miss May Manning, Stenographers and Office Workers' Union.

February 6 was the date set for presentation of arguments by proponents, but no speakers appeared before the sitting of the sub-committee.

## Maternity Protection in Hawaii.

A message from the Senate to the House of Representatives, on February 29, announced that the Senate had passed, with amendments, an Act (H.R.4121) to extend the provisions of certain laws to the territory of Hawaii. Among the laws included is the Sheppard-Towner Law for the hygiene and welfare of maternity and infancy, which has been accepted by no fewer than forty of the States, through their several legislatures. The House was asked to concur in the changes made by the Senate, and the Bill went to conference. Senator Sheppard, of Texas, who introduced the original Bill in the Senate, has no doubt that the measure will become law, so that work for prenatal and infancy care will receive Government financial aid in Hawaii, as in the forty States which have accepted the provisions of the law. The Act requires that States accepting the aid of the Government submit their programmes of infancy and maternity welfare work to the Maternity and Infancy Board, of which Miss Grace Abbott, head of the Children's Bureau, is chairman; and that when the plans of each State are approved by the Board, that State shall add to each dollar appropriated for its use by the Federal Government a dollar from its own revenues, for the carrying out of the work.

## Welsh Women's Peace Deputation.

Representatives of sixty organisations of women were present at the luncheon given in New York on February 18 to the deputation which the women of Wales have sent to bring a peace memorial to the women of the United States, and on February 20 the three Welsh women—Mrs. Peter Hughes-Griffiths, Miss Mary Ellis, and Miss Elined Prys—were the dinner guests of the World Court Sub-committee of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee in Washington.

The dinner was given in the large dining-room of the clubhouse of the American Association of University Women, and Mrs. Raymond Morgan, chairman of the World Court Sub-committee, presided. The members of the Welsh deputation made brief addresses, which were enthusiastically received by the more than one hundred women present, and their talks were followed by short speeches from: Mrs. Glen Levin Swiggett, representing the National Council of Women; Miss Grace Abbott, chief of the Children's Bureau; Mrs. Amy Wood, of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Miss Ethel Smith, of the National Women's Trade Union League; and Miss Josephine Schain, of the Department of International Co-operation to Prevent War of the National League of Women Voters.

The Welsh women brought to Washington a parchment copy of the memorial to American women which 400,000 Welsh women have signed, and presented it to the chairman of the World Court Sub-committee for final disposal.

On the day after the dinner the delegation was received by the Secretary of State, the Hon. Charles Evans Hughes, and by the President of the United States, to whom Mrs. Morgan presented the three members of the first peace deputation the women of any country have ever sent to the women of another country. The President showed great interest in the beautiful illuminated copy of the memorial shown him, and agreed that the Smithsonian Institution would be the proper repository for it. It is believed that it will be placed among other documents of great historical interest already in the Smithsonian collection.

## Women Voters' Plans.

The Executive Committee of the National League of Women Voters has made plans for the Annual Convention in Buffalo, April 24-29, and the programme of work to be submitted to the Convention at that time for consideration, possible amendment, and final adoption.

The heads of the Departments of Efficiency in Government and of International Co-operation to Prevent War, and the chairmen of standing committees on child welfare, education, living costs, social hygiene, uniform laws concerning women, and women in industry, have prepared

their several programmes and have sent them to committees in State Leagues for discussion and suggestions. Each programme, after it is brought before the Executive Committee, goes to State and local League officers for consideration by members, so that as submitted to the Convention it will represent the opinions of women in all parts of the country, but when submitted will still be only tentative. Any delegate will be at liberty to suggest whatever change she wishes, and the programmes as finally incorporated in the League's Plan of Work will be the considered convictions of the whole League as nearly as they can be ascertained.

Each department and committee programme is divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to subjects advised for study; the second, to subjects for legislation; and the third, to methods of work.

Under the head "World Co-operation," the Department of International Co-operation to Prevent War will present for study the following subjects: The Permanent Court of International Justice; the League of Nations; and the Bok peace plan. Under "International Intercourse and Treaty-making Machinery," the department will offer for study, State Department methods, a Constitutional amendment in relation to the Senate ratification of treaties (a two-thirds vote is necessary for ratification under the Federal Constitution), and open diplomacy. The third topic for study is a review of American foreign policy, past and present, and includes the Monroe Doctrine and the Philippine Islands.

As Federal legislation, the department will recommend support of the entry of the United States into the Permanent Court of International Justice, which the League endorsed at the last Annual Convention; support of resolutions permitting American representatives to act in international economic committees and in conferences; support of measures for disarmament by international agreement (naval, military, aviation, gas and chemical warfare), and support of measures to secure prompt publication of State Department reports.

The method-of-work programme of the department will repeat last year's plans for round tables, and for group study and discussion of international subjects. Schools for speakers, whose subject will be the prevention of war, and institutes on international questions, will be recommended, and the Convention may adopt all or part of the programme as the majority of delegates desire.

The Department of Efficiency in Government will recommend for study: The Presidential primary; national, State, and local legislative bodies; and the simplification of State administration. In many of the States there is a movement to promote economy and efficiency by reorganisation of the machinery of State government and consolidation of bureaus which now duplicate or overlap in their work. It is estimated that in the State of Virginia the number of bureaus can profitably be reduced from more than sixty to twelve.

For legislative action the Department of Efficiency in Government will recommend: A short ballot; the direct primary, with such modifications as will make nominations more representative; the merit system in Civil Service; the budget system. Recommendations for study include the manager plan in local government. A number of American cities have adopted this plan, which does away with the mayor and city council form of city government, and substitutes a single responsible head, a manager who is not elected, but hired at a fixed salary to conduct city affairs, subject to dismissal if he is not a success.

The Committee on Child Welfare will recommend for study: The Children's Bureau standards of child welfare adopted in 1919; State child labour laws and compulsory school attendance, and adequate protection of children in need of special care, including measures for adequate pensions for widows and children, for economic and social provision for illegitimate children, and for better protection of defective and delinquent children. The Federal legislation the committee will ask for is the Constitutional amendment giving the Congress power to fix minimum standards for child labour, and leaving to the States the right to raise but not to lower this standard.

Such an amendment is now before the Congress, and the League is working heartily for its adoption. After the amendment is secured there will be work to establish the Federal minimum standard. Full appropriation for the Maternity and Infancy Law (Sheppard-Towner), and for the support of the Children's Bureau are re-affirmations of items in last year's programme.

The Committee on Education endorses the proposal for a Federal Department of Education—the head of which shall have a seat in the President's Cabinet—and Federal aid to States for physical education in the public schools. It should be remembered that "public schools" is the term used in the United States to mean free schools supported from township or county taxes, differing from the English board schools in social implication as well as in several other respects. The great majority of American children are educated in these public schools.

The programme for education in the several States calls for compulsory education for nine months in each year of all children between the ages of eight and sixteen, and recommends consolidation of rural schools. Because of the ease of motor-car transportation, the small one-room "district schools" have been done away with in many rural counties, and a single large central school, to which children are brought in omnibuses, substituted. The new system has been found generally satisfactory. The department urges systematic education of adult illiterates and the foreign-born, through public school extension classes. In one part of the State of Minnesota the night public schools are now attended by ten per cent. of the local population.

The committee urges that in all schools where courses in general education are conducted, the use of English as the basic language be required.

The tentative programme of the Committee on Uniform Laws Concerning Women recommends the removal of all common law disabilities of women; a constitutional amendment giving the Congress power to legislate on the subject of marriage and divorce; eligibility of women for jury service, and the abolition of the unit system of jurors in civil cases; abolition of common-law marriages; the requirement of notice before the issuance of a marriage licence; health certificates before marriage; equal interest of spouses in each other's real estate, and half interest and control by each spouse of all property acquired after marriage by either or both, with power in each spouse to devise and bequeath one-half interest in this property. Other recommendations are: Abandonment of wife and child to be made a criminal offence, for which extradition may be demanded; competency of each spouse to testify in any suit at law or in equity where the other spouse may be a party; and adequate representation of women voters in all party conventions, committees, and boards elected by the voters. In regard to the methods of work to obtain uniform laws, the Committee says:—

"The National League of Women Voters having helped to secure the enactment of many laws in many States, materially improving the legal and civil status of women, the continuance of its programme of securing specific legislation to remedy legal discriminations against women is declared to be the policy of the League. 'Blanket' legislation on these subjects is disapproved."

The Committee on Women in Industry puts unemployment first on its programme of subjects for study. Chief emphasis is placed on methods of preventing unemployment, the Commons (Wisconsin) proposal for unemployment insurance, methods of preventing industrial accidents to women workers, and workmen's compensation laws. Adequate appropriation for the United States Women's Bureau and for support of a Federal employment bureau are recommended. The committee urges work in the States for shorter hours—the eight-hour day and the forty-four-hour week; for the prohibition of night work for women in industrial occupations; for a minimum-wage commission, and for the prohibition of the employment of women six weeks before and after childbirth. Collective bargaining as a means of giving women workers a share in the control of conditions of employment is endorsed. Leagues are asked to make



local canvasses among immigrant women to bring them into classes for those unable to speak, read, and write English, and to prepare working girls' budgets with costs of items in each community.

The recommendations of the Committee on Social Hygiene urge the study of criminal-court procedure to ascertain whether there is discrimination against women in the matter of sex offences. Volunteer workers unfamiliar with courts are suggested for committees to study these matters. Community provisions for recreation and for the prevention of juvenile delinquency are among the other recommendations for study subjects. The striking new item suggested for study is methods of bringing sterilisation of the unfit into effect. Social hygiene courses in teacher-training institutions are recommended, and the importance of visiting teachers to deal with causes of delinquency before the condition is established is stressed.

Legislative measures recommended are: Anti-prostitution laws which provide for the punishment of both men and women offenders; the Injunction and Abatement Law, permitting individual citizens to close by injunction places used for purposes of prostitution; the Ouster Law, providing for the removal from office of any official who neglects or refuses to enforce the law; adequate appropriations for State health departments for the carrying on of a broad venereal-disease programme. The League agreed in Convention two years ago to oppose the compulsory examination before conviction of persons suspected of sex offences, and the committee repeats the stand taken then. The minimum age of consent is set at eighteen years, and the age applies to boys as well as to girls.

When the programmes of the various departments and committees are finally adopted by the Convention, it is likely that one or more items will be selected to present to the major political parties for insertion as "planks" in party platforms. In 1920, when the League of Women Voters was just beginning its work, the Republicans and the Democrats consented to insert in their party platforms the plank asked for by women voters, calling for the independent citizenship of married women. If the Congress does not adopt the Children's Amendment, and the Senate does not endorse the entry of the United States into the World Court before adjournment, League leaders in Convention may see fit to ask that both these measures be endorsed in the major party platforms.

The board of directors of the National League of Women Voters have issued the formal call for its Fifth Annual Convention in Buffalo, N.Y., next April 24 to 29. Every State in the country will be represented. Mrs. Maud Wood Park, president of the League, will preside.

The Convention will mark the opening of an intensive nation-wide campaign "to get out the vote" for the 1924 election. Final instructions how to get out 75 per cent. of the eligible vote, the League's goal in the Presidential Election, will be given.

The test of the League's four years of work is in the 1924 election, members are reminded.

"In the election of 1920, for the first time in the history of our nation, women throughout the United States were entitled to vote," the call reads. "Most of them were strangers in the great domain of public affairs. They had much to learn.

"Year by year since then the League has carried on with increasing success the work of educating women for the primary duty of good citizenship—the casting of an informed and conscientious vote.

"At Buffalo, the League will gather with another national election ahead, an election in which the work of four years will be tested. To meet that test, all our strength of mind and numbers, all our experience, all our wisdom, and our devotion will be needed.

"The League calls every member. Come and enlist anew for the work before us. Come and do your share that self-government may be justified of its fruits."

Get-out-the-vote methods suggested by the National League of Women Voters have been used with marked success in the recent Hawaii primary and election. Word to this effect has been received by the National League officers from the Hawaii League of Women Voters, which has a membership of more than eight hundred.

Individual instruction in the use of the ballot was given to hundreds of women, and the Hawaii League reports that the number of incorrectly marked ballots was very much less in the election than in the primary. As the League was the only organisation in Hawaii teaching women how to vote, the improvement in voting technique is credited to the efforts of its members. Of the registered women voters 87.6 voted, and of the men 87.9 were recorded, a difference of three-tenths of one per cent.

"The figures from Hawaii show clearly that when efforts are made to give women political education, women are just as interested in their political duty as men, and vote just about as generally," said Miss Belle Sherwin, National vice-president, on receipt of the news from Hawaii.

"Hawaii has given great impetus to our campaign to get out 75 per cent. of the possible vote this year, for we cannot let it be said that in the States interest in good government is less among intelligent women than it is in the far away territory."

When are husband and wife not one?

When they are in business together.

This is not a riddle. It is the law's answer to Mrs. John F. Draughon, executive secretary of the Tennessee League of Women Voters, who, after the death of her husband, sued the executor of his estate for payment of salary due her from her late husband.

Mrs. Draughon had entered into a contract with her husband to revise certain forms used in the business college he conducted, and do other technical work. She was to receive 100 dollars a month, and had already worked thirteen months without drawing any salary, when her husband died. The executor of the estate contended that a husband and wife are one in the eyes of the law, and that a business contract between them for service rendered could not be valid.

Judge Hickman, of Nashville, who was presiding in the Davidson County Court, where the case was heard, decided that a contract of a wife with her husband "covering services of a technical or expert nature, outside the scope of the ordinary domestic duties, is valid and binding." The husband, after all, in the eyes of the law, was not a husband, but a mere business associate.

## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM.

Washington Congress for a New International Order.

Thursday, May 1st, 1924.

Ten years' work of the Women's International League: Survey by Miss Jane Addams, President of the League.

Friday, May 2nd.

The World Situation—Political and Economic.

Saturday, May 3rd.

Psychological Effects of the World Situation.

Sunday, May 4th.

Young People's Day.

Monday, May 5th, and Tuesday, May 6th.

How to Secure World Peace—by Individual Action, and by the Work of our League.

Before the Congress there will be a conference with other organisations which support the League's policy for Reconciliation.

After the Congress there will be an International Summer School at Chicago, May 17th to 31st, on "Human Factors in Internationalism." Apply to Chicago Branch of W.I.L.P.F., Room 1010, Fine Arts Building, 408, South Michigan Boulevard.

## SECTION FRANÇAISE.

### LE VOTE DES FEMMES EN ITALIE —LE PROJET DE LOI ET SES PERIPETIES.

ON dirait une page de votre Chesterton. Combien d'aventures! Qu'est-ce, une satire? une farce? On se moque ou bien on vous roule? A nos camarades de l'étranger à juger.

Mettons un peu d'ordre dans les faits. Vous toutes, vous vous souviendrez des promesses solennelles faites aux femmes italiennes, faites par le Chef de notre Gouvernement à notre Congrès. On aurait dit que les faits suivraient les paroles et en effet le 7 décembre, 1923, on présentait à la Chambre des Députés un projet de loi pour l'admission des femmes au droit électoral administratif.

Selon le rapport de la majorité, par lequel on a présenté le projet de loi, on semblait à un moment donné très sûrs de l'approbation du vote: on aurait dit un navire qui déliait ses voiles, vent en poupe et tout près du port tant désiré. On ne prévoyait pas qu'en janvier la session fut close!

Come vous vous en souviendrez également, le projet de loi approuvé par la majorité de la Commission parlementaire accordait le vote administratif aux femmes qui, ayant vingt-cinq ans accomplis, fussent:

1° Décorées de la médaille à la "valeur militaire" et de la croix de mérite de guerre.

2° Décorées de la médaille à la "valeur civile" ou de la médaille au "mérite de la santé publique," ou de celle de l'instruction élémentaire, ou de celle pour services prêtés à l'occasion de calamité publique.

3° Mères et veuves de soldats tombés au champ d'honneur.

4° Aux femmes qui auraient passé le cours élémentaire obligatoire (cinquième classe élémentaire) ou qui auraient subi un examen correspondant.

5° Aux femmes qui jouissaient de l'autorité paternelle et de la tutelle.

6° Femmes payant annuellement pour des taxes de l'Etat une somme non inférieure à un total de 40 livres par an et sachant lire et écrire.

Le projet de loi ainsi élaboré par la Commission est arrivé à la Chambre comme je l'ai déjà dit, à la fin de l'année, 1923. Après une vive discussion au sein de la Commission: il y avait eu un fort courant de minorité guidée par les socialistes; c'est même le député Philippe Turati, qui en a été le rapporteur. Le projet de loi élaboré d'abord par le Gouvernement Italien par son remanieur de projets électoraux, M. Acerbo, a été appuyé par le rapporteur parlementaire pour la majorité, M. Terzaghi, député fasciste. La minorité de la commission parlementaire a exprimé plusieurs fois son opinion contraire bien nette, à l'ensemble du projet de loi dans la forme avec laquelle il avait été présenté par la Chambre.

La dissidence était fondamentale, parce que le projet faisant renaitre des préjugés politiques depuis bien longtemps ensevelis contredisait les meilleures traditions de l'Assemblée législative, révoquait et annulait ses précédents votes presque unanimes, et sous l'apparence d'étendre le droit du vote, en réalité le restreignait et le pervertissait, reniant en plein le principe déjà acquis, avec la réforme de 1913 à la conscience et à la pratique du droit public italien—du suffrage universel égal et direct.

La minorité s'exprimait textuellement ainsi, et certainement pas influencée par le Comité pour le Suffrage de Femmes, ni par nos "leaders" suffragistes qui avaient l'air d'accepter sans trop d'enthousiasme le projet de loi cuisiné au Palais Chigi. Nos condottière ont-elles pensé qu'il était inutile de raisonner ou bien prévoyaient elles la mort immature du projet de loi?

Mais retournons aux faits. Donc, la minorité écrivait ainsi:

"Le projet de loi sur l'électorat administratif aux femmes en Italie renie le principe du suffrage universel.

#### Offense au Principe

"Il le renie de deux façons. D'abord en créant pour la moitié de la population italienne—un suffrage restreint et même très restreint, de groupes privilégiés. Peut-être qu'il y aurait à peine un million de femmes qui en bénéficieraient sur plus de douze millions de femmes majeures italiennes.

"Or, ceci n'est pas du gradualisme, comme l'on prétend. On dérive le droit de vote soit de la qualité considérée en sens général de citoyen et des intérêts fondamentaux qui s'y relie — plus vitaux et nécessaires pour les classes les moins armées et les plus dépourvues—ou bien de capacités toutes spéciales, par lesquelles une partie des citoyens représente la totalité; ou bien enfin, de la présomption d'intérêts particuliers, estimés plus dignes de protection (recensement, contributions, etc.). Mais où, comme en Italie, et désormais dans le monde civil entier—il est naturel que le droit égalitaire du suffrage ('un homme, un vote') revient de droit à tout citoyen en tant que tel; que le citoyen est la seule raison de légitimité de l'Etat; que ce vote n'est pas une récompense, mais un droit, et il est parmi les droits qui ont été appelés "naturels" parce que l'Etat les reconnaît, quoique l'on a confessé mille fois, et cela est implicite dans la législation du suffrage masculin déjà étendu à ceux qui ne savent ni lire ni écrire, que le point tout à fait matériel de savoir composer ou faire quelque gribouillage sur quelques lignes, encore moins un chiffon de papier de la première petite école, n'apporte rien d'essentiel à la capacité électorale, et que, d'ailleurs, comme on n'apprend pas à nager sans se jeter dans l'eau, il est puéril d'attendre que la maturité politique précède l'exercice, tandis qu'au contraire cette maturité est justement l'effet de la pratique; c'est une évidente absurdité de penser qu'un principe de telle nature acquiert ou perd de sa valeur par les différences physiologiques qui distinguent les sexes. Et on peut dire de même pour cette inégalité de traitement, entre le vote politique et le vote administratif, sous prétexte que l'un et l'autre n'ont pas le même caractère: car en effet la substance même du vote administratif est purement politique, elle reflète même des intérêts et des problèmes, pour lesquels l'intervention de la femme est plus particulièrement appelée."

#### L'Attentat au Suffrage Universel Masculin —les Précédents.

Mais, après l'offense au principe, le projet sous examen, altérerait la portée effective du suffrage déjà placé dans le code et mis en pratique. Etant donné que, en insérant dans le corps électoral un nombre limité de catégories féminines, et en plus grande partie les catégories privilégiées, il lésait le résultat égalitaire même, du suffrage masculin et, en attribuant injustement, à la partie sociale la plus largement munie, un vrai vote multiple de classe, il reproduisait et accentuait ainsi, bien que sous une autre forme, sur le terrain administratif, la différence qualitative, introduite dans la dernière réforme de l'organisation électorale politique par laquelle, à un groupe de votes et de votants, on attribue un poids énorme vis à vis des votes et des votants des autres groupes. Pratiquement, avec le projet de loi en question, la famille la plus aisée ou mieux placée dans la société, disposera, dans la plupart des cas, d'au moins deux votes: la famille prolétarienne, par contre, d'un seul.

La minorité s'est déclarée ouvertement contraire au vote par catégories, aussi parce que la Chambre italienne, en cette matière, à travers toutes les pro-



positions, tous les projets, rapports, etc., s'est toujours déclarée contraire à ce gradualisme qui n'est que la consécration des privilèges. En effet, ce fut le 19 novembre, 1920 (XXV<sup>ème</sup> législature), à l'occasion d'une autre loi sur les élections administratives, que la Chambre eut à approuver avec une unanimité presque complète—240 votes contre 10, un amendement de la teneur suivante: *On reconnaît le droit électoral aux femmes, dans les mêmes conditions que celles établies pour les hommes.*

Donc il était naturel, qu'un, grand nombre de députés de tous les secteurs fussent contraires à un projet de loi qui mettait sous les pieds, des votes, et des traditions parlementaires. Mais pour qui ne sait pas que l'Italie est en train de traverser une grave crise de l'institution parlementaire! La minorité au sein de la Commission, n'a pas désarmé pour cela et a continué avec la même énergie sa saine logique. Elle n'a pas voulu reconnaître les limites de 25 ans, tandis que pour les hommes, la limite est 21 ans. Au sujet de la concession du vote aux mères et aux veuves de soldats morts à la guerre, la minorité a vu "un beau geste," geste qui à première vue est très noble, il tend aux mères et aux veuves des morts à la guerre l'arme de la carte d'élection, ce geste en lui-même peut être applaudi, bien que l'on puisse juridiquement parler, le discuter, à ce point de vue, que l'on fait descendre d'un malheur, qui peut être purement accidentel, un droit politique, en équivalant la faculté du vote à une breloque ou à une pension; ce geste perd même de sa valeur sentimentale et patriotique quand dans l'acte même, il repousse non seulement les innombrables travailleuses, dont le double servage, comme femmes et salariées, est une guerre et un martyre de chaque jour; mais en outre il repousse toutes les autres femmes des combattants—filles, sœurs, et parentes—qui souffrirent toutes les horreurs de la longue guerre, avec le père, les enfants et les frères au front, desquels beaucoup retournèrent mutilés et invalides, pour éterniser dans leur foyer, l'agonie des années terribles: et lorsque la mort est due au hasard, non pas à un courage exceptionnel, donne le pouvoir à la décharge fortuite d'une balle autrichienne ou croate de décider du plein droit de nationalité d'une femme italienne.

Comme vous le voyez, la critique a été logique, implacable pour relever dans ce projet de loi si avare, les graves défauts qui s'y trouvaient. En 1911 il n'y avait qu'un demi million de femmes qui possédaient le diplôme scolaire, condition nécessaire voulue pour être électrice: il est probable que si le projet de loi était approuvé, les huit dixièmes des femmes italiennes étaient exclues du vote. Sans compter qu'il se serait produit une différence énorme entre les femmes de l'Italie septentrionale et celles de l'Italie méridionale, dans laquelle l'instruction est très faible. Mais le projet de loi n'allait pas regarder à de si petits détails d'instruction, lorsqu'il s'agissait de donner le droit de vote aux femmes propriétaires, boutiquières ou similaires, celles-ci auraient pu être électrices même si elles ne savaient qu'à peine lire et écrire.

La proposition de loi donc n'a pas eu de succès dans le milieu parlementaire, ni dans le pays. Les associations féminines, les organisations Pro Suffragistes, n'ont pourtant pas eu pour leur projet de loi, toutes les désapprobations qu'il méritait. Elles furent au contraire criées, avec la véritable intuition des droits des femmes et de la vraie justice, par le groupe de minorité au sein de la Commission. Les Associations féminines semblèrent se contenter de l'expérience, espérant que la pratique ensuite pourrait raccomoder le bât et ne prévoyaient pas que cette fois encore elles auraient fait le rôle de l'âne... avec la bastonnade. En examinant le pour et le contre, ce n'a donc pas été une très grande catastrophe si—en janvier—la clôture inattendue de la session de la Chambre des Députés italienne encore renvoyé l'approbation de la loi. Je ne crois pas que les femmes d'Italie aient beaucoup pleuré sur cette fin prématurée, bien qu'elles aient été humiliées par l'habituelle dérision. Que l'on pense qu'il y a désormais plus de 60 ans que le problème du vote aux femmes en Italie est sur le tapis du Parlement et il reste ainsi encore: parmi les cadavres que la clôture de la Session parlementaire jette à la morgue

législative, il y a encore, une autre fois, un projet de loi sur le vote des femmes. Ressuscitera-t-il? Il faut souhaiter que si ce projet retourne, il ne retournera pas avec un effet stérile, et que la nouvelle loi accordée pour les femmes ne sera pas un document d'involution législative, il faut souhaiter qu'il ne soit pas encore une fois porté en dérision, qu'encore une fois, le Parlement, ne porte pas atteinte au plus sacré des droits modernes, et qu'il ne se moque pas encore de toute la masse martyre des travailleuses d'Italie. Certains pourraient croire que ce sont des vœux exprimés personnellement, mais peut-être que les femmes des autres nations, qui ont dû combattre des luttes de tout genre, qui sont passées par d'innombrables sacrifices pour obtenir justice, c'est à dire pour obtenir le droit sacré de citoyen, apprécieront l'opposition de la Commission Parlementaire de minorité italienne dans la session parlementaire qui vient d'être close. Que fera la nouvelle Chambre? Comme vous le savez l'Italie est entrée dans le point vif de la lutte électorale. Les nouveaux meetings électoraux seront convoqués pour les premiers jours d'avril. La nouvelle loi électorale générale voulue par le Gouvernement National-fasciste est organisée de telle façon qu'elle assure la majorité la plus grande au parti fasciste. Ce n'est certainement pas le moment le plus propice pour revendiquer en Italie le respect et la consécration des droits des citoyens. Et donc, sous quel drapeau pourra se réfugier le droit des citoyennes d'Italie qui invoquent depuis des années et des années le suffrage universel aussi pour elles? Trouveront elles aussi un blond sauveur de Nazareth qui les guidera vers la justice et la vérité sans compromis avec les divers gouvernements et parlements? La prochaine Chambre italienne sera pour la concession du vote aux femmes? Je ne crois pas, par conséquent nous n'avons plus qu'à attendre, attendre encore, nous armer pour de nouvelles luttes et vous autres femmes des autres peuples, femmes des autres nations, aidez nous et soutenez nous.

Laura Casartelli-Cabrini.

Roma, february, 1924.

### ITALIE.

L'année 1923, pendant laquelle nous avons eu l'honneur de voir les suffragistes de tous les pays réunis à Rome par l'Alliance, n'a pas été couronnée par la petite victoire que nous croyons avoir. La résolution de la Chambre n'a pas permis à M. Mussolini de déposer le projet de loi, pour la concession du vote municipal qu'il nous avait promis et qui avait été rédigé par M. Acerbo. Dans sa relation au roi pour la dissolution de la Chambre, M. Mussolini dit que parmi les arguments dont la prochaine législature aura à s'occuper il y aura la "graduelle participation des femmes à la vie politique." Espérons que cette question ne soit pas laissée comme toujours pour les jours d'agonie de la Chambre.

Nous avons fait quelque progrès dans notre organisation. Des nouveaux comités ont été formés dans plusieurs villes, et nous avons pu prendre des accords avec les autres associations nationales pour la formation de groupements suffragistes dans les villes où les associations ont des branches. Le nouveau conseil de notre fédération a pu se réunir déjà deux fois après notre congrès (novembre, 1923), et les délégués des associations ont participé à ces réunions (à Rome et à Bologna). Une nouvelle réunion de délégués et un petit congrès aura lieu à Florence pendant le printemps.

Si le progrès de la législation suffragiste a été nul, on ne peut pas dire la même chose pour les questions féministes. Je donnerai ici un résumé des principales modifications aux lois qui intéressent les femmes.

1. Le Parlement a voté la modification de certains articles des codes et une commission a été nommée pour les rédiger. Ce que signifie que lorsque la Commission les aura rédigé il ne sera pas nécessaire de les faire discuter encore par la Chambre; ils seront simplement signés par le roi. Parmi ces articles il y en a qui regarde:—

(a) La recherche de la paternité, qui n'était pas admise par notre code et qui sera autorisée pour les

enfants illicites (pas pour les adulterins ou incestueux).

(b) Le mariage contracté par une personne après la déclaration de presumed mort du conjoint (pour absence) sera valide même si le premier mari (ou femme, ce qui est plus difficile!) revient. La seule exception sera pour les prisonniers de la dernière guerre.

(c) Des modifications très importantes seront apportées dans le chapitre de la tutelle et de la *patria potestas*. La commission est d'avis d'étendre à tous les enfants les lois très bonnes qui ont été faites pour les orphelins de la dernière guerre: de donner à un magistrat spécial la tutelle des orphelins; de donner aux instituts orphelins, etc., qui les accueillent, la *patria potestas* en cas d'indignité des parents, etc.

Une autre loi qui peut intéresser les associations féministes regarde la lutte contre l'alcool (prohibition de vente des vins et liqueurs, le matin avant dix heures, le soir après dix heures, pendant les élections, etc.), limitation du nombre des buvettes, cafés, etc. Cette dernière parti de la loi est très discutée par l'opinion publique.

Dans les règlements sanitaires, il y a des dispositions nouvelles pour la lutte contre les maladies vénériennes: entre autres, la notification obligatoire des cas de maladies vénériennes syphilitiques, de l'ophtalmie des petits enfants, etc., qui ont été constatés dans les usines, les écoles, les communautes: la création obligatoire de dispensaires (avec le concours du gouvernement): la nomination de médecins spécialistes pour les dispensaires, la propagande, etc. La visite aux maisons de tolérance sera faite par ces médecins, non par des médecins choisis et payés par les propriétaires des maisons.

Des modifications ont été apportées à la loi sur le travail des femmes et des enfants et pour l'inspection du travail.

Un décret a été fait pour ne pas permettre le jeu d'hasard, les casinos, etc.

L'annexion de la ville de Fiume à l'Italie a oté à cette ville le droit de divorce: avant l'annexion un décret avait été fait pour ne pas permettre aux personnes qui avaient changé leur nationalité de reprendre la nationalité italienne. C'est avec ce moyen que les riches pouvaient divorcer avec beaucoup de frais, mais avec facilité, ce qui donnait aux riches une situation tout à fait privilégiée, puisqu'il n'y a pas de divorce en Italie.

Il est inutile d'ajouter que dans le champ du travail l'année a été très difficile pour les femmes: on cherche partout de renvoyer les femmes pour laisser la place aux ex-combattants ou aux soi-disants ex-combattants. Le gouvernement même a renvoyé beaucoup de femmes et dans les administrations des postes et télégraphes et des chemins de fer on a fait aux femmes une condition des plus injustes.

M. Mussolini a changé la constitution du *Conseil supérieur* ou certaines catégories (d'employés p. ex.) avaient des membres éligibles: ces élections (auxquelles participaient les femmes) n'ont plus lieu. On a créé des ordres pour les professions (ingénieurs, professeurs, etc.) sur le modèle des ordres des avoués: les femmes seront électrices et éligibles, paraît-il, aux conseils de ces ordres dont les règlements ne sont encore connus.

Une nouvelle décoration (Stella del Lavoro) a été créée pour les vieux ouvriers; ce sera, avec l'*ordre des chevaliers du travail*, la seule décoration qui puisse être conférée aux femmes.

L'activité des femmes a été assez grande; des congrès ont eu lieu en plusieurs villes:—

à Rome.—Congrès de l'éducation familiale.

à Sienne.—Congrès du Conseil National de femmes.

à Milan.—Congrès pour la moralité.

à Bologna.—Congrès des sages-femmes.

à Rome.—Congrès des femmes docteurs en médecine.

à Milan.—Congrès suffragiste.

„ —Congrès contre la traite des femmes.

„ —Congrès des associations féministes.

Milano, 15/3/24.

M. ANCONA.

### BELGIQUE.

Le 21 février, quelques députés de la droite ont déposé à la Chambre une proposition de loi accordant aux femmes l'électorat provincial. L'éligibilité leur est déjà acquise à tous les degrés (commune, province, Chambre, et Sénat) depuis 1921.

Ce projet est assuré du soutien de toute la droite et d'une vingtaine de parlementaires socialistes (dont 18 à la Chambre et 2 au Sénat) qui ont signé en 1921 l'engagement de voter l'électorat provincial féminin avant les élections de 1925. Une majorité est assurée à la Chambre, mais au Sénat les anti-suffragistes des deux gauches feront un dernier effort pour remettre en question les droits féminins.

Lors de la récente crise ministérielle des négociations ont eu lieu entre les catholiques et les libéraux précédemment irréductibles, et il semble bien que ces derniers fourniront l'appoint nécessaire pour le vote de la proposition.

LOUISE VAN DEN PLAS,

Secrétaire générale de la Fédération belge pour le Suffrage des femmes.

### FRANCE.

L'Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes a tenu son congrès annuel le 15 mars, mais aucun compte rendu n'est parvenu à la rédaction de *Jus Suffragii*. Nous le regrettons d'autant plus, que nous faisons de grands efforts pour gagner des lectrices françaises et dans ce but nous consacrons plusieurs pages de notre revue à la section en langue française, dont les lectrices seront naturellement déçues de ne rien trouver ayant rapport au mouvement français.

### NOUVELLES FÉMINISTES.

#### Grande-Bretagne.

#### Union Nationale des Sociétés pour l'Égalité des Citoyens.

*Franchise égale.*—Le débat sur l'amendement à l'Acte de 1918 sur la "Représentation du peuple" qui permet l'extension aux femmes de tous les droits politiques accordés aux hommes a eu lieu le 29 février. Il n'a pas soulevé d'opposition (les conservateurs étant en petit nombre) mais le gouvernement, assez tiède, a promis de faire ce qu'il pourra si le projet de loi est accepté par la commission. Malheureusement ce projet est lié à d'autres réformes électorales qui en retarderont l'examen.

*Pensions pour les Veuves avec Enfants.*—Le Parlement est tout entier en faveur de la réforme et exercera, on l'espère, une pression sur le gouvernement.

*Tutelle égale.*—Le Cabinet a promis de nommer une Commission pour étudier ce projet de loi. La composition de cette commission nous renseignera sur les véritables intentions du gouvernement.

*Légitimation.*—Un projet de loi pour légitimer les enfants naturels quand leurs parents se marient a passé presque tout entier à la Chambre des Lords, et un second projet de même ordre a passé en seconde lecture à la Chambre des Communes. Le Gouvernement a promis de le discuter.

*Séparation et Pension alimentaire.*—Le projet a passé en seconde lecture à la Chambre des Communes. Cette loi aurait passée l'an dernier sans la dissolution du Parlement.

*La famille deshéritée.*—Le livre de Miss Rathbone réclame une allocation pour les enfants payée par l'état ou par les patrons. Il signale les progrès faits dans ce sens en France, Belgique, Allemagne.

*Comité pour l'Etude des Impôts.*—Mrs. Wootton, une jeune économiste, a été nommée membre de la commission pour faire une enquête sur la dette nationale.



**Le Groupe des Six Points.**—Le meeting du 18 mars au Queen's Hall, présidé par la Vicomtesse Rhondda, a passé une résolution réclamant : pension pour les mères veuves, droits de tutelle égaux, modification du "Sex Disqualification Act" qui laisse subsister des injustices telles que : refus d'admettre les paires à la Chambre des Lords, renvoi des femmes fonctionnaires qui se marient, etc.

**Alliance politique et sociale de Ste. Jeanne.**—L'Alliance a organisé le 29 février un cortège autour de la Chambre des Communes avec pancartes portant : "Votes pour les femmes sur les mêmes bases que pour les hommes," pendant que le sujet était discuté en séance. L'Assemblée générale de l'Alliance s'est tenu à Bedford College le 15 mars et a envoyé au nouveau gouvernement ses "Résolutions" réclamant pour les deux sexes : franchise égale, salaires égaux, opportunités égales pour les fonctionnaires, droits de tutelle égaux, abolition des lois de sollicitation et de la prostitution légale à Hong Kong, régleme de la question des Détroits.

**Election à Guernsey.**—L'élection de janvier a été très disputée. Les candidats eurent à publier un manifeste dans les journaux locaux, puis à louer une salle et exposer leur programme. Miss Mary Randall, la seule candidate, fut élue seconde sur la liste des 18 candidats avec 1,042 votes.

#### La Ligue de la Liberté des Femmes.

Un grand meeting en coopération avec d'autres sociétés féministes s'est tenu à l'Essex Hall de Londres. La résolution suivante, votée à l'unanimité, a été envoyée à tous les ministres : "Ce meeting de femmes déléguées demande au gouvernement de faire passer sans délai à l'état de loi le projet qui donne aux femmes des droits politiques égaux à ceux des hommes, au même âge et après un temps de résidence assez court.

La Ligue a rappelé au Ministre du Travail la nécessité de fournir du travail au quart de million de chômeuses, et a appelé l'attention du Ministre de l'Intérieur sur l'utilité de la nomination de femmes dans la Commission des prisons, dans les inspections ainsi que dans le service administratif et médical des prisons de femmes, des hôpitaux, et des asiles d'aliénées.

La Ligue réclame une réunion de sociétés féminines pour examiner le projet de loi sur la protection de l'enfance et de la jeunesse et suggérer certains amendements nécessaires. Enfin la Ligue travaille en province à faire élire plus de femmes au Parlement.

#### Irlande du Nord.

**Comité consultatif des Femmes de Belfast.**—Avec la restauration de l'ordre et l'amélioration du commerce, le travail du comité prend plus d'importance. La liste des projets de loi présentés au Parlement du Nord comprend deux mesures d'un intérêt spécial : loi contre les drogues dangereuses, loi sur l'illégitimité. Cette dernière est due à la pression du Comité. On sait qu'en Irlande, la mère non mariée n'a droit à aucune indemnité sauf si elle reste au "workhouse," ou si elle a perdu sa place. Le nouveau projet de loi obligera le père à fournir une rente pour l'enfant. Le chiffre élevé de la mortalité infantile en Irlande appelle des lois de protection urgentes. Le comité des femmes a organisé aussi des meetings à Belfast en faveur de la Réforme morale, de la protection légale des ouvrières, et il fait une propagande en faveur de la Société des Nations.

#### Etats-Unis.

**Les Sociétés féministes font opposition à l'amendement "Droits égaux."**—25 représentantes des onze organisations féministes nationales de la Fédération du Travail et de diverses Trade Unions Nationales se sont présentées le 7 février devant la sous-commission judiciaire du Sénat et ont donné leurs raisons contre l'amendement à la loi fédérale. Ces raisons sont les suivantes : Cet amendement détruit l'effet des lois protectrices pour les femmes et les enfants ; les lois existantes des états offrent des remèdes suffisants contre les inégalités qui existent actuellement.

**Députation des Femmes du Pays de Galles.**—Cette députation apportait aux femmes d'Amérique un mémorial pour la paix signé par 400,000 galloises. Un dîner a été organisé à New York en son honneur par les déléguées de 60 sociétés féministes, le 18 février. La députation a été reçue le jour suivant par le Secrétaire d'Etat et par le Président des Etats Unis. Le mémorial sera placé dans la Smithsonian Institution.

#### Hawaii.

**Protection de la Maternité.**—Le Sénat a accepté avec des retouches un acte qui étend le bénéfice de certaines lois des Etats Unis au territoire de Hawaii. Parmi ces lois est comprise la "Sheppard Towner" Loi pour l'hygiène et le bien-être de la mère et de l'enfant.

#### Indes.

**Semaine de l'enfant.**—Dans les Indes la coutume s'est établie de consacrer la semaine du milieu de janvier à l'enfant. Des sornes considérables ont été offertes pour organiser dans toutes les provinces des conférences d'hygiène infantile, des expositions, des concours de bébés, etc. Cette coutume est particulièrement utile dans un pays où la mortalité infantile est énorme et ne surprend personne. Les statistiques ont prouvé qu'à Bombay par exemple 600 bébés sur 1,000 meurent au-dessous d'un an ; à Madras, 368 sur 1,000. La nouvelle campagne menée contre ce fléau a déjà pour effet d'éveiller dans l'esprit des mères le sens de leur responsabilité.

**Pour les mères qui travaillent.**—Des milliers de femmes travaillent dans les usines, les mines, les plantations de thé et de café. Depuis quelque temps, les associations pour le bien-être de l'enfant ont fondé des crèches dans le voisinage de nombreuses usines et des nurses qualifiées en prennent soin. Il en existe à Bombay, Bengale, Sholapur, mais il en faudrait des centaines de plus.

**Nouvelle loi de protection infantile.**—Le gouvernement de Bombay a déposé un projet de loi analogue à celui de Madras qui fut voté en 1910, et comme lui s'inspire du Children's Act anglais de 1908. Les enfants vagabonds ou sous la garde de criminels, prostituées, etc., seront remis à la garde de personnes qualifiées ou placés dans des écoles industrielles. Les actes de cruauté, l'entraînement au vice, la séduction de mineurs au-dessous de 16 ans seront punis. Des tribunaux d'enfants seront établis.

#### Autriche.

**Visite de Mme. Avril de Sainte-Croix.**—L'activité féministe a été plus active cet hiver. Le Conseil national des femmes a reçu Mme. A. de S. C. en octobre ; elle a profité de son séjour à Vienne pour présenter au gouvernement trois demandes. (1) Nomination d'une déléguée à la Ligue des Nations pour la Commission sur le trafic des femmes et des enfants. Cette déléguée très utile ne peut pas être créée faute d'argent. (2) Nomination d'une déléguée membre du Conseil N. des F. à l'Office de l'émigration autrichienne. Le C. N. avait déjà fait cette demande sans résultat. (3) Protection des femmes et des jeunes filles qui voyageront seules, après l'abolition des passeports. Cette question est sérieusement étudiée par le gouvernement autrichien.

**Visite de Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon.**—En janvier le C.N.D.F. a reçu Mrs. O. G. qui venait faire des recherches scientifiques à Vienne. Mrs. O. G. a fait une causerie sur le travail social des femmes britanniques et les préparatifs de la conférence pour la prévention des causes de guerre.

**Les études secondaires des jeunes filles.**—Le gouvernement a tellement réduit les subsides que l'entretien des écoles est devenu presque impossible. Le C. N. leur doit une aide matérielle.

**Une réforme de la loi sur le mariage.**—Depuis des années on réclame la réforme de la loi sur le mariage, spécialement l'obligation du mariage civil. Après la révolution, la réforme soutenue par les Social-Democrates allait être accomplie, mais la catastrophe économique l'a retardée. La Diète de la Basse Autriche a établi un mariage-licence pour aider les milliers de couples catho-

liques séparés et désirant être réunis. Maintenant que la situation politique permettrait la réforme, Mgr. Seippel et le parti catholique s'y sont opposés, mais la question a été de nouveau discutée au Parlement. E. Freundlich, la seule femme de la Commission, réclama non seulement l'introduction du mariage civil, mais la réforme totale de la loi matrimoniale. Elle déclara que les femmes, après avoir reçu leurs droits politiques, devaient recevoir leurs droits civils entiers, et que l'égalité totale devait être obtenue surtout dans la famille.

**Travaux intellectuels des femmes.**—Les ouvrages du Dr. Charlotte Buhler sur la vie psychologique et le développement de la jeunesse ont fait sensation. Dans sa conférence au C.N.D.F., à Vienne, elle a expliqué ses points de vue nouveaux sur la psychologie de l'enfant. Son étude sera utile aux pédagogues.

**Voeux de réforme des lois pénales.**—Des cas variés d'offense contre les enfants ont indigné le public. Le Conseil national D.F. a résolu d'étudier la question et de provoquer la réforme des lois sur cette matière.

#### Hongrie.

Nous enregistrons un succès. En janvier fut déposé à l'Assemblée nationale le projet de loi sur le suffrage municipal et de Comté qui enlevait aux femmes le droit d'éligibilité municipale. La Feminislak Egyisület protesta par la voie des journaux et par des meetings et le Ministre de l'Intérieur vient de retirer le paragraphe relatif à cette exclusion. La F. E. qui a obtenu le retrait de cette mesure conseille à ses chères camarades de l'étranger de ne jamais se décourager quelque désespérée que puisse paraître leur cause. Le suffrage sera obtenu tôt ou tard.

Le Comité pour les affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée nationale hongroise avec le Comité judiciaire vont discuter le projet du Ministère de la Justice concernant la ratification de la Convention de Genève pour la répression du trafic des femmes et des enfants.

Le Ministère de la Justice a informé la F. E. qu'il entendrait ses arguments et discuterait la question des droits de citoyen des femmes mariées.

#### Allemagne.

Les conditions politiques et économiques de ces 5 dernières années ont obligé les organisations féministes à réviser leur programme. Aussi la question que le Conseil national des femmes discutera les 13 et 15 mars à son meeting biennal de Munich aura pour sujet : "Effet des transformations économiques et sociales sur les femmes et la vie de famille." Deux rapports seront lus et discutés : "L'indépendance intellectuelle de la maîtresse de maison au temps présent," et "La protection de la famille dans l'article 119 de la Constitution du Reich."—Le mariage, basé sur les droits égaux des sexes, est le fondement de la famille et de la nation sous la protection de la Constitution. Les familles nombreuses ont un droit spécial à la protection de l'Etat." Un autre rapport traitera des problèmes de la vie actuelle de la jeune femme, et Dr. Bäumer et la Présidente Frau Ender parleront des femmes dans les parlements et comme électrices. Une journée sera consacrée à la question féminine la plus brûlante : La situation des femmes fonctionnaires. D'autres rapports seront lus par des experts sur : inspections d'usines, enseignement, postes, télégraphes, chemins de fer, administration, barreau, etc. On espère que les protestations du C.N., s'ajoutant aux protestations des intéressées et aux protestations de femmes députés, arrêteront quelques-unes des iniquités les plus criantes (renvoi des fonctionnaires mariées sans indemnité ni pension de retraite). Un amendement a déjà été déposé dans ce sens par une femme député au Landtag saxon. Néanmoins la réduction du personnel féminin est déjà commencée : 2,500 femmes mariées ont été renvoyées du service des postes, et les prochains renvois seront plus nombreux. Dans les écoles de plusieurs Etats Baden, Berlin, Hambourg, les institutrices mariées ont été renvoyées sans avertissement.

**Les Femmes dans les Jury et la Magistrature.**—Le Conseil National des Femmes a fait une enquête sur les expériences des femmes jurés et magistrats dans leur villes respectives. Voici le résumé des réponses :

En général, sauf de rares exceptions, les femmes ont été acceptées et appréciées par les autorités : magistrats, ministères publics, membres des jurys ; mais c'est la défense qui les a récusées surtout dans les cas de divorces, de crimes sexuels et dans tous les cas où elles soutiendraient la cause des femmes, des épouses et des mères. A la dernière élection des jurés et des magistrats pour 1924 on a compté un plus grand nombre de femmes, et malgré la loi qui réduit de moitié le nombre des jurés, la proportion de l'élément féminin est resté la même.

**Union des Sociétés des Femmes allemandes : Visite de Mrs. Corbett Ashby.**—Le comité exécutif et le comité international du Lycéum Club allemand ont organisé en l'honneur de Mrs. Corbett Ashby une réception à laquelle ont assisté un grand nombre de femmes membres du Parlement, fonctionnaires, chefs d'industrie, organisatrices d'œuvres sociales, suffragistes, etc. En outre, elle eut une entrevue avec les membres de la Fédération des Femmes Universitaires, elle visita le groupe berlinois de l'Union des Femmes Allemandes où elle fit une conférence sur le développement de la police féminine en Angleterre ; elle visita le Reichstag pour voir au travail les 32 femmes du Parlement ; enfin elle alla visiter le groupe le plus ancien de l'Union à Frankfort sur le Main, et prit ainsi contact avec l'activité sociale d'une vieille ville libre d'Allemagne.

**Lettre du Patriarche grec à Constantinople à l'Honorable Lady Katherine Bompas.**—"Au nom de l'Eglise de Constantinople, nous prions pour le triomphe des efforts de votre congrès, qui vise à élever la femme à la position en harmonie avec l'esprit de Christianisme. Dans le royaume de Christ 'il n'y a ni mâle ni femelle,' mais un être humain, raisonnable, libre, remplissant les devoirs et poussant des droits que le Créateur lui confère dans les limites de ses facultés. Le succès de vos efforts aura la plus grande importance pour le progrès universel de l'humanité. Que le Christ bénisse votre œuvre."

#### Letter from the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople.

To the Honourable Lady Katherine Bompas,  
General Secretary of the International.

In accordance with the desire expressed in your letter, we extend, through you, to your Congress, greeting in the name of the Church of Constantinople. We heartily pray for the triumph of the efforts of your Congresses on behalf of the uplifting of woman to the position in which the spirit of Christian teaching intends that woman should stand. In the Kingdom of Christ "there is neither male nor female," but one man (human being), reasonable, free, sharing duties and rights within the bounds of individualities and abilities with which the Creator has separately endowed male or female. The success of your efforts will be of the greater value (?) to universal human progress in so far as the equality of man and woman aimed at by you is recognised [to be] within the predestination foreordained by natural individualities to each of the peoples, in agreement with the institution of the family sanctified in Christ, the first type and unity of human fellowship.

May Christ bless your work.

Extrait d'une lettre de Dr. Budzinska Tylicka, de Pologne :—

"Nous vous félicitons à toutes les femmes anglaises que vous avez gagné 8 mandats dans votre parlement, et nous sommes contentes que votre Diète est devenu beaucoup plus démocratique. Chez nous, nous avons 9 députées et 3 sénatrices. Tout ça n'est pas beaucoup—mais toujours un grand progrès—et l'avenir est à la femme !"



*Extrait du rapport sur la nationalité des femmes mariées:—*

*Norvège, Suède, Danemark.*—Anna Bicksell écrit que ces gouvernements déposeront des propositions royales dans le même sens: Permettre à une femme mariée de garder sa nationalité tant qu'elle reste dans son pays, mais une étrangère épousant un Suédois sera Suédoise; cette clause ne pourra être changée qu'après des négociations internationales.

*Allemagne.*—Le gouvernement ne veut rien changer sans un agrément international. L'Association des avocates s'intéresse à la question.

*Empire britannique.*—La rapport a été soumis au Comité spécial de la Conférence impériale. Le Comité est d'avis que le principe de la loi actuelle qui donne à la femme la nationalité de son mari doit être maintenu. Il recommande cependant que la femme-veuve ou divorcée puisse reprendre sa nationalité.

*L'Association pour la loi internationale.*—Le Dr. Schuster a soutenu le droit de la femme mariée à sa nationalité. La question sera discutée à la prochaine réunion de l'Association à Stockholm en septembre, 1924.

## GREAT BRITAIN.

### The Professional and Business Women's Hospital League.

The League was founded to make provision for women in time of severe sickness, who earn their living in professional or business callings. Many a worker falls ill while living in a tiny flat or at a hostel, where she cannot possibly be properly nursed; or perhaps discovers that an operation is necessary, and is totally unable to provide the money to pay either the fees of a nursing home or of a doctor or surgeon. She is most reluctant to become a patient in the general ward of a hospital. If she is a member of the League, she can obtain skilled treatment in a private ward—all for the small sum of 5s. per annum.

Members have other advantages, and one of them is that they can obtain surgical instruments and appliances at a greatly reduced figure, owing to the generosity of a firm of instrument-makers.

Special arrangements for hospital treatment are made for provincial members, by which they obtain all benefits.

All women under 55 years of age who work for their living in a profession or a business are eligible for membership. The subscription for the first year is 5s. 6d., and 5s. for every succeeding year (payable on January 1). The League has been incorporated as a Friendly Society, and the Public Trustee is one of the trustees.

All information can be obtained from the Secretary, Professional and Business Women's Hospital League, 197, Edgware Road, London, W. 2.

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