

Women's Franchise.

PRELIMINARY
ISSUE.

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The Position To-Day.

WOMEN'S Suffrage has at last stepped into the charmed circle of practical politics. A year or so of vigorous campaigning following the patient spade-work of the last forty years, has sufficed to achieve this result. Not the least striking characteristic of the movement is the extraordinary variety of the methods employed; the most casual observer cannot fail to be impressed by the wide difference in the policy deliberately chosen and pursued by different bodies for the furtherance of their common end. A rapid survey of the events of the year may be useful as an indication of the advance that has been made.

May 19th, 1906, the occasion of the historic deputation, is clearly a fit starting point. "Educate the country" was the Prime Minister's advice, and it cannot be denied that the suggestion has borne fruit. Both inside Parliament and outside, there has been evidence of remarkable activity. The first effort was made in connexion with the Plural Voting Bill, which it was proposed to amend in such a way as to abolish the sex-disability. That effort failed, and women can only be grateful to the House of Lords for their rejection of the measure. At the opening of the autumn session, an attempt was made, but without success, to pledge the Prime Minister to deal with the question of the enfranchisement of women, some time before the Liberal Government went out of office. In November, Mr. Keir Hardie introduced a Bill, but the Government refused to give it facilities and it was dropped. Sanguine supporters of the movement hoped to find a reference to Women's Suffrage in the King's Speech; as a protest against its omission, a body of women, with Mrs. Despard at their head, went to the House of Commons to present a resolution on the subject to the Prime Minister. They were met by mounted police and fifty-nine arrests were made.

Next came Mr. Dickinson's measure, which the fortune of the ballot enabled him to introduce at an early date. The second reading was taken on March 8th, and after a full afternoon's debate, in a house well-guarded by police and amid a scene of great excitement, the speaker refused the closure and once more a Women's Suffrage Bill was "talked out." A large and enthusiastic mass meeting, held the same evening at Exeter Hall, demanded the immediate enfranchisement of women. A second day for the adjourned discussion was refused by the Prime Minister, but meantime Sir Charles McLaren introduced a resolution on the subject and it still seemed possible that the opinion of the House might be taken. March 27th was the day chosen. Discussion, however, was prevented by Mr. Levy's blocking motion. A crowded meeting, convened by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, was held the night before, in the Queen's Hall, and Mr. Dickinson himself was among the speakers. No further opportunity has occurred for bringing forward a measure, and it is to be feared that, as far as women are concerned, the present session will be as barren of legislation as last session.

Outside Parliament, much has been done in the direction of educating the public and of keeping constantly before them the importance of the movement. At all by-elections, representatives of women have been present, questioning the candidates and working for those who declared themselves most favourable. The Women's Social and Political Union pursues the policy of working independently of party, and consistently opposes Liberal candidates as representatives of a government which declines to enfranchise women. At Wimbledon, where it appeared likely that a well-known opponent of the women's

To Our Readers.

We desire, in this preliminary issue, to explain that this paper has been promoted primarily with the idea of advancing the cause of Women's Suffrage, but it has its genesis in an ardent desire that truth may prevail, and we wish at once to assure our readers that our columns will be as open to intelligent objectors as to warm sympathizers. We are faced with the fact that up to the present the intelligent opposition has not made itself felt. We hope that such objectors (if any) will give expression to their views, so that their arguments may be endorsed or refuted. It is a recognized fact that to give publicity to any cause will, if that cause be ephemeral, but hasten its extinction, and will equally, if that cause be just, hasten its consummation.

Our readers will now, for the first time, have an opportunity of hearing all sides of the question, the more so in that we have been fortunate enough to secure the enthusiastic co-operation of Societies, whose tactics differ, though all are working for the furtherance of what is, after all, their common object.

The immediate need for a publication of this kind is brought about by the recent cessation of two papers which had given publicity to the Suffrage movement. Other plans are being formulated, but our object is to fill a breach as worthily as lies in our power. One Society, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, has arranged for the publication of an organ of its own—a monthly magazine—to appear in October. It will then be for the readers of this journal and the other Societies herein represented to decide whether there is any necessity for our continuance. With this idea subscriptions are only being taken for the quarter July to September. This, our preliminary issue—we purposely do not call it number—hastily compiled as the urgency of the case necessitated, will be included free of charge in the first quarter's subscription. In order to emphasize the fact that this journal is not being promoted with commercial aims, the proprietors undertake that any profits which there may be shall be allocated to the Societies which give their support.

cause would be returned unopposed, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies themselves put a candidate into the field, the Hon. Bertrand Russell, though of course without any hope of a heavy poll in his favour. Hundreds of meetings, indoor and open-air, have been held during the year. On February 9th a procession of women marched through rain and mud from Hyde Park to Exeter Hall, where a meeting was held. In Edinburgh Lady Steele submitted to have her furniture sold rather than pay the taxes which she had no voice in levying or spending; a crowd of five thousand attended the sale.

A valuable piece of work has been done by the collection of signatures by Miss Black to a plain declaration in favour of allowing women to vote in Parliamentary elections on the same terms as men. The formation of the "Men's League for Women's Suffrage" is a happy augury that in the future women will have the organized help of men to an even greater extent than in the past. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the movement is not "anti-man," and that there is no question of its leading to sex cleavage. It is certain that men equally with women will reap the benefit of women's enfranchisement. The only cleavage is that which sets those who love liberty for themselves and others in opposition to those who believe in an aristocracy of sex.

So much is this movement before the public mind at the present moment that it is almost impossible to take up a paper which does not contain some reference to it; two suffrage plays, each written by a woman, have been produced in London; even the music-hall stage accepts the topic for its jests. It penetrates the school-room and the nursery; spectacled dolls, dressed in severe grey and carrying flags with the legend "Votes for Women," are now on sale in the toy shops.

From time to time encouragement comes from abroad. First Finland enfranchised its women, and this month the news has been brought that Norway, after a struggle, has decided to add 300,000 women to the roll of its electorate. In England, the fight is still in progress; but much has been accomplished. It has certainly been made abundantly clear that the women's party is a factor which can no longer be ignored; this is a lesson which the by-election policy has been especially effective in impressing.

Women Agitators in the Past.

THOSE Englishmen who so strongly deprecate the recent women's demonstrations at Westminster may be surprised to learn that our ancestors, on the contrary, of all ranks and classes, expressed keen approval of the same kind of thing in their own day.

As long ago as 1386 we find the Mercers of London warmly praising a number of women who, by a successful demonstration, had saved the lives of some innocent men. This had roused the wrath of Sir Nicholas Brember, a tyrannical Lord Mayor of London, and his overbearing conduct drove the Mercers to appeal to King Richard II. for redress. In their petition they mention admiringly "a company of gode women," who, when "men dorst nought, travailled en barfote to owre lige Lorde to seeke grace of hym for trewe men as they supposed" ('Rot. Parl.,' vol. iii. p. 225).

The Elizabethan chronicler Stowe, too, relates approvingly in his 'Annales' the story of "a crew of stout dames" who dared "to checke a great Duke in open Parliament." "The great Duke" was no less a person than Humphrey of Gloucester, and the affair took place at Westminster in 1428, during the minority of his nephew, Henry VI. "In this Parliament," says the historian, "there was one mistris Stokes, with divers other stout women of London, of good reckoning, well apparelled, came openly to the upper parliament and delivered letters to the duke of Gloucester, and to the Archbishops and to other Lordes there present, containing matter of rebuke and sharpe reprehension of the Duke of Gloucester, because hee would not deliver his wife Jaqueline out of her grievous imprisonment, being then helde prysoner by the duke of Burgundy, suffering her there to remaine so unkindly, and for his publike keeping by him another adultresse, contrary to the law of God, and the honourable estate of matrimonie." The

women of London felt that this public insult to one of their sex demanded their intervention, and Stowe has nothing but admiration for the methods they employed.

Space forbids a full description of the memorable demonstration of 1641, when the London women, fearing the Commons were about to yield too much to the King in matters of civil and religious liberty, came to the door of the Lower House in great numbers, headed by "Mistress Anne Stagg, a gentlewoman and brewer's wife," who presented a petition, whereupon "Mr. Pym came to the Commons' door, addressed the women, and told them that their petition had been thankfully accepted and would be carefully considered." Remembering the treatment accorded last Ash Wednesday to a certain "peaceful, orderly, and quiet procession" (these are the words of an eyewitness, Mr. H. W. Nevinson), one concludes that they did things differently in those days of old. But women were then politically free, and were therefore expected to recognize their responsibility as citizens by taking an active part in public affairs.

F. E. MACAULAY.

Women's Franchise in Norway.

THE women of Norway have at last won a measure of political power, and we must rejoice in hearing the news. The race is indeed making rapid progress towards liberty. Almost every week there is some advance to be marked; and this is for us a new spur to hope and effort. We are happy in the knowledge that our northern sisters have broken down the political barrier. Every Suffragist in Britain sends them greeting. But the measure passed by the male legislators of Norway is not by any means perfect. It does not establish sex-equality. It only permits women to have votes on the terms laid down by men. While it gives into the hands of women the power which accompanies the possession of a certain number of votes, it does not establish their undeniable right to that power. Women are still left dependent upon men for such freedom as they enjoy, their human right to absolutely equal freedom is not acknowledged, they are still a subject class and their powers are but the graciously permitted privileges of favoured subjects.

Apparently woman's need of representation has forced the Norwegian legislature to give them some measure of voting power, but deliberate limitations have been introduced. The right to vote has been conferred only upon women who are themselves tax-payers or who are the wives of tax-paying men. The limitations introduced will exclude a large proportion of the adult women of Norway, and this cannot be regarded as satisfactory when every adult man is a voter. The power of the vote is desirable. But women are seeking not the power alone; in addition to it, and as the basis of it, they seek the recognition of their co-equality with men. The institution of a deliberately limited franchise for women, when manhood alone qualifies the male voter, should be accepted by women only as a means by which to hasten the removal of all arbitrary sex inequalities.

The Adult Suffrage opponents of our policy have long sought to persuade us that once Manhood Suffrage was obtained the political sex-bar would be removed immediately. But the absence of the property qualification in Norway does not appear to have paved the way for the easy institution of sex-equality. On the contrary the limiting of the women's vote by the legislature proves to us that a masculine electorate does not cease to be masculine when it embraces all men. The Adult Suffragists of the all-or-nothing school would do well to mark this fact. If after this lesson from Norway they still prefer to risk all for a measure which would almost certainly result in Manhood Suffrage alone; it must be because they are not open to reasonable argument. Every earnest believer in sex-equality must face the issue frankly now. No question of the basis of voting power can obscure the real position. Whatever may be the terms on which men vote, on those terms women are entitled to vote. Only a franchise founded upon this unalterable principle can be either satisfactory or safe. To avoid the danger in Britain recognition of the equal political right of women with men must not be lost sight of; together the two halves of the race must advance to true national freedom.

TERESA BILLINGTON-GREIG.

Politics by Exhibition.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

DURING recent years we have become used to many forms of political agitation. Politics by speeches are, of course, as old as man himself—perhaps older, for it is said that the rooks hold pow-wows of their own at which weighty matters of state are discussed. Politics by hoardings can also claim a venerable antiquity. But it has been left for the Women's Social and Political Union to invent politics by exhibition. Disregarding precedent, they have ensconced themselves in the Imperial Court at Earl's Court, and have rented a stall there for the purpose of selling literature and converting the unbelieving.

A visit made for the purpose of witnessing the new departure convinced me of the fact that the average Briton, even when in holiday mood, takes a decided interest in the doings of these ladies. A large sign with the letters "Votes for Women" was over the stall, and a crowd of both sexes was congregated round it, intent upon questioning and arguing with the women who were there. The conversation turned upon New Zealand, which some one in the crowd declared was a standing proof of the failure of women's suffrage. An unexpected champion, however, came forward in the person of a man who said he himself was from New Zealand, and had come to Earl's Court for the express purpose of visiting the women who, in this twentieth century, were agitating for the vote in the Mother Country. He was able to prove to the complete discomfiture of his opponent that women's suffrage in New Zealand, instead of being a failure in that country, had been a complete success.

Another visitor to the stall was a man from the Transvaal, whose interest in the propaganda work had been aroused by reading a leaflet found in one of the streets of Japan. His visit was mainly due to curiosity, and before he went away he bought a quantity of literature to take back to read on his way home to South Africa.

Of course the "Suffragettes" do not escape a certain amount of good humoured chaff and some pretty straight criticism. "I don't believe in female suffrage," said one, "I'm a believer in the empire, and if we are to have a great empire, we must keep the cradle full. Now, if women had votes—"

"And what about this youngster?" said one of the ladies who had taken her turn in Holloway, holding up a laughing baby. "Yes, he's all right; now you suffragettes couldn't bring up a child like that."

"But as it happens he's my son." The crowd laughed. "You see," said the lady, pursuing her advantage, "we suffragettes are concerned about the death rate among children, and we want the vote to put that to rights."

I made enquiries as to the general success which had attended the stall.

"Roughly speaking, we get into touch with something like a thousand people every day," I was told. "Of course, some (a few) are mere scoffers, but the great majority are genuinely interested in what we have to tell them. We sell several hundred pieces of literature every week, and several thousand ask specially for our leaflets. One of our women is permanently occupied at the stall, but for the rest we look to voluntary workers who come for a week of afternoons or a week of evenings to answer the questions of the unconverted."

"One of the most amusing things in our experience is the surprise which awaits the members of the crowd who have been content to accept their version of the manners and appearance of the suffragettes from the ordinary daily press. We are glad to know that the surprise is a pleasant one."

The stall certainly seems a novel and useful method of propaganda work, and ought to be encouraged by all who are anxious to secure the vote for women. I understand that tickets of entry to the Exhibition can be bought from the head offices of the Women's Social and Political Union at the usual price of 1s., and that such purchases help to cover the outlay which is necessary to keep the stall going.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.'

DEAR MADAM,—I am asked to write a few words for the first number of *Women's Franchise* about the Declaration with which my name has come to be associated. The idea was a very simple one. More than once in the course of last summer the plea that women at large did not desire the Franchise had been urged by prominent persons. To some of us it would seem that if the plea were true, and if only a minority of women did really desire to vote, it would become particularly safe to grant the vote to those who did desire it. But this is, of course, not the view of the persons who put forward the statement. It occurred to me that the best way of replying to it would be to obtain from women whose interests were especially affected by the lack of the Franchise, a plain declaration that they wished women to be allowed to vote in Parliamentary elections on the same terms as men.

Publicity would, of course, be necessary; I went, therefore, to the *Tribune* office and submitted the idea to some representatives of that paper. I did not communicate beforehand with any of the Suffrage Societies already existing, because it seemed desirable not to give an opening for the favourite declaration that the workers for Women's Suffrage were but a stage army, and that every effort really came from the same quarter. This effort, such as it was, came from a new quarter.

It was decided that a certain number of well-known ladies, representing varied branches of activity and various opinions, should be asked to give their signatures as a beginning and that these should appear, together with a letter setting forth the nature and object of the Declaration in the *Tribune*. The letter appeared early in last November, and with the publication of it opened the movement which has kept some of us pretty busy ever since.

The whole history of its progress to the present time, will, I hope, be given by another hand; meanwhile, I will only say that it was welcomed by both wings of the general suffrage movement, and that the National Society and the Women's Social and Political Union have consistently helped us from the outset. Of our individual helpers some have belonged to one organization, some to the other; all have worked together in complete harmony, and all seem likely to go on doing so to the end.

Yours faithfully,

CLEMENTINA BLACK.

Obituary.

By the death of Mr. Henry Pethick the Women's Social and Political Union has lost one of its best and truest friends. Mr. Pethick was one of those men who have made the women's cause their own. He saw clearly how much humanity has to hope from the emancipation of women. He cared deeply for our movement, and until the last was eager to have news of everything concerning it.

Those of us who were privileged to know Mr. Pethick can never forget his great kindness, his generous encouragement. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence has the affectionate sympathy of all her comrades in her sorrow.

C. H. P.

Notice to Contributors.

The Editor will be glad to receive Articles containing information on the subject of Women's Suffrage, and will return those not considered suitable as soon as possible if a stamped addressed envelope is sent with the MS. As the paper is on a voluntary basis, and all profits go to help the cause, no payments are made for contributions.

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THE QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETING.

THE forthcoming Quarterly Meeting of Council is to be held at Cambridge on July 9th. The Cambridge Society is holding a large public meeting overnight, at which the speakers, among others, will be Mr. Cameron Corbett, M.P., Mrs. Philip Snowden, the Hon. Bertrand Russell and Miss Frances Sterling.

It is hoped that there may be a large attendance of the general public at this meeting as well as of representatives attending the Council. That body begins its labours at 10.30 A.M. the next morning and will probably sit all day, as the Agenda is a long and interesting one.

The Council will be entertained to a Garden Party at the close of its deliberations by Mrs. Whitehead, and there will be a reception in the evening in Magdalene Hall and Grounds given by Mrs. Ramsay and the Cambridge Committee.

POSTER COMPETITION.

The Union, through the generosity of one of its members, has been enabled to offer a prize of six guineas for the best poster in favour of Women's Suffrage, for use at Parliamentary Elections. To make the competition still more interesting, the first prize (open to men as well as women) will be supplemented by a second prize of 5*l.* for the best design sent in by a woman, offered by another benefactor.

Designs must measure 30 in. by 40 in. or 20 in. by 30 in., must be suitable for reproduction, and must not contain more than two colours, besides black and white. They should be sent in not later than *September 15th next*, addressed to—The Secretary, National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 25, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

A nom-de-plume should be written on the back of each drawing (not the real name of the artist). The full name and postal address of the artist should be enclosed in a separate envelope, on the outside of which the nom-de-plume should appear.

The Union will reserve to itself the right to reproduce the prize drawings, and to exhibit any or all of the drawings for any time or in any place that shall seem likely to further the interests of the Suffrage Cause. Should circumstances permit of the reproduction of drawings other than the prize ones, the Union would make direct arrangements with the artists.

There will be a further competition—first prize 2*l.*, second prize 1*l.*—for the best design for a picture post-card in favour of Women's Suffrage. Details of this competition will be announced later, but the same date is fixed for sending-in day (*i.e.*, September 15th).

The exhibition of the drawings for these competitions should be one of the attractions of the autumn.

The Artists' League for Women's Suffrage (which has already done yeoman's service to the Union by contributing many spirited posters, as well as devoted canvassers, for the Wimbledon bye-election) will doubtless take an active part in the competitions, in which it has already manifested a very marked degree of interest and approval.

A WEEK'S CAMPAIGN IN BRISTOL.

UNDER the auspices of the Bristol and West of England Society for Women's Suffrage (a branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies) and Women's Reform Union, a most successful Women's Suffrage campaign was recently held in the neighbourhood. The Bristol Society for Women's Suffrage is one of the oldest in England, and numbers among its members some of the pioneers of the movement. The whole

campaign was carefully thought out, and reflects great credit on the local Suffrage organization. It was preceded by a series of drawing-room meetings, when short speeches were given, enlivened by music. These meetings were well attended, and had the desired effect of rousing local interest in the forthcoming crusade.

The chief speakers during the campaign, which lasted a week, were Miss Frances Sterling, honorary secretary of the National Union, Miss Reddish, and Mrs. Cooper, of the Lancashire and Cheshire Women Textile Workers Committee. It was successfully started at a crowded afternoon meeting held at the Ladies' Club, Clifton. A lively and largely attended meeting was held the same evening in the Temperance Hall, Gloucester Road, Bishopston. A number of irresponsible youths at the back of the hall kept up a running fire of illogical comment, occasionally interspersed with bursts of ironical laughter, but the unflinching good humour with which their interruptions were received converted them into champions of the cause, and by the end of the evening they led the applause and enthusiastically encored several of the speakers. The speeches were delivered from the industrial point of view. Mrs. Cooper pointed out that in these days women must either work or starve, and that the wage-earning woman had now become an absolute necessity. She maintained that all false sentiment must be put on one side, and that the position must be boldly faced. Miss Reddish supplemented these remarks by discussing the wages question in the textile trades of the north. In these trades the majority of workers are women, and they occupy a lower position in the industrial world than do men. The vote has thus become to them a question of bread and butter. It was absolutely essential that they should be given the same power to protect themselves that men now enjoy, and she appealed to all those present to do their utmost to improve the conditions under which so many women work.

Perhaps the most interesting meeting in the campaign was that held for Bristol students in the Hannah More Hall, Park Street. Teachers from the secondary and national schools, men and women, had been invited, and there was a large attendance. The chair was taken by Miss Pearce. Miss Frances Sterling was the principal speaker. She pointed out that women formed more than half the population of the country; they were held responsible in all duties of life, yet they were excluded from taking part in the affairs of their country merely on the ground of sex. She spoke of the importance and variety of women's work, and of the undignified and illogical position they occupy at election times, when their help in educating voters is urgently sought for, and yet they are not allowed the vote, in the right use of which they are often called upon to instruct ignorant or illiterate men.

The open-air meetings were a decided success, and they were a great feature of the campaign. Large audiences listened in the Horsefair, and outside Wills' tobacco factory, where the *employés* showed much interest in the subject. Members of the Committee made a house-to-house visitation in various districts of South Bristol, addressing little knots of people and asking them to attend the meetings.

It is to be hoped that the excellent example set by the Bristol Suffrage Society will be followed by others, and that an organized campaign will be held in every constituency throughout the country.

AT GRAY'S INN HALL.

LAST Tuesday, June 18th, was the Annual Ladies' Night of the Gray's Inn Debating Society. The subject of debate was: "That the attempts of women to gain an increased influence in politics constitute a source of danger to our Commonwealth and a menace to our Western civilization."

As was expected the discussion turned very easily and naturally on the question of votes for women. Neither the proposer nor the opposer spoke on the subject of the resolution. Both opposed the political enfranchisement of women. Hence the delight that was felt when it was announced that the vote had decided against the resolution and in favour of the women.

Amongst the speakers who took part in the debate were Miss Evelyn Sharp, an active member of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage, and Mrs. Philip Snowden, who represented the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

THE CENTRAL SOCIETY.

During the month of May the membership of the Central Society (the London branch of the Union) was increased by fifty-one new annual subscribers.

The Executive Committee of the Central Society has decided to hold a series of social gatherings next autumn in their offices at 25, Victoria Street. All members, workers, and sympathisers will be heartily welcomed at these meetings.

A Garden Party Suffrage Meeting will be held in North Hackney on Friday, June 28th. The Chair will be taken by Mr. Hart Davies, the local member of Parliament, and the meeting will be addressed by members of the Women's Liberal Federation, by Miss Pankhurst and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence of the Women's Social and Political Union, and by Mrs. Pember Reeves of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage.

Since the 1st of May, eleven drawing-room meetings have been organised by Local Committees of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage in the following districts of the metropolitan area:—Campden Hill, Chelsea, North Kensington, South Kensington, Marylebone, South Paddington, St. Pancras, Wandsworth, and Westminster. These meetings have been well attended and have resulted in many offers of help and many new members.

The veteran workers for Women's Suffrage, Mr. and Mrs. Haslam, have been visiting London, and were amongst the speakers at a very successful meeting held under the auspices of the Local Committee of the Central Society at Wandsworth, by kind permission of Mrs. Shillington.

The Constitutional Law and Women's Suffrage.

EVERY one who has studied the question without prejudice, must recognise that the enfranchisement of women is the crying need of the day. But not all realise that this is not necessarily a modern gift of grace, but the restoration of an ancient right.

It is certain that Parliament was founded in the reign of Henry III., because the King wanted money. He sent out a summons to all who should be liable to find him aid, to choose one among them as a representative, and send him up to the King's Council, to decide with the other representatives "how much aid they would grant the King." When women had to pay the subsidies, either by money or military service (from which they were never excused) they were also invited to help to choose their representative. This fundamental cause of the existence of Parliament is embodied in the Parliamentary dictum "Taxation without Representation is robbery."

It is also certain that because of this fundamental conception, every Act, Law, Charter, summons, was always couched in terms of the common gender, "Freeholder," "resident," "inhabitant," "person." The Reform Bill of 1832, for the first time in the history of the British Islands, imported the idea "male" into "The Representation of the People," when its framers used the phrase "male persons." In 1850, Lord Romilly's Bill, otherwise called Lord Brougham's Bill, for "shortening the language of the Acts of Parliament" decided that "the terms importing the masculine shall always include the feminine gender, except where otherwise expressly stated." With this statute before their eyes, the framers of "the Representation of the People's Acts" of 1867 deliberately struck out the phrase "male persons" of 1832, and substituted the word "men" without expressly excluding "women." Logically, therefore, and constitutionally it includes them. A decision, however, not of Constitutional

Law, was given against them in the case of "*Chorlton versus Lings*," in 1868, in the Courts of Common Law on the ground that women had never had the right to vote. This presupposition was based on an error.

The deficiency of the English language alone is the cause that there is any question to-day at all. There is with us, no word clearly to translate "Homo" as opposed to "Vir." Till the nineteenth century "man" did so, except where women were expressly excluded, that is, it was a common noun, as much as "freeholder," "inhabitant." It is only since then, that it has been ruled by custom, that "the word man shall always include woman, where a penalty is incurred, and never include woman where a privilege is conferred." But as I have shown, Lord Brougham's Bill gave legislative force to the wider Constitutional use of the word.

In olden times the Franchise was the indefeasible right of the freeholders in the county, or as they were then called "The Suitors at the County Courts or Manorial Courts." The duties of these suitors were only two, to act as jury on the local cases brought up before the court, and to choose their representative, knights of the shire, or county members. To these county courts women were not only admitted, but they were summoned, and if they did not send a proxy, or reasonable excuse, were fined. Sometimes women, if great landowners, held the courts themselves.

In the case of the boroughs the position of women was even more clear. In the days of the strict guilds, or trades companies, there was no exclusion on account of sex. Women could be made apprentices, become free, rise to the livery, with all the responsibilities and powers of freemen. In short, they became freemen. There is no list of "the freemen of the City of London" which does not include the names of some women. There were sisters as well as brothers in every gild. And they who voted for their borough members were those who paid Scot and lot, and were "of the freedom." Similar customs prevailed in the provincial boroughs and in Scotland. Consequently by the Constitution women had not only the privileges of freemen, but were freemen.

By Parliamentary usage, if there is no present clear custom, on any point, reference is made to the last Parliamentary decision on that point. Now, since the Union, there has been a curious illustrative contested election. The property of Gatton in Surrey (a notable pocket borough) had been settled by her father upon Dame Elizabeth Copley, on her marriage. While her husband lived he voted, or rather, returned his own two members for his wife's property by indenture. On his death Dame Elizabeth did so, though she had a son and heir, grown to manhood. Through the spread of popular power, the lady seemed later to have returned her indenture as from "Dame Elizabeth Copley and the other inhabitants of Gatton." There were seven householders in all on her estate. Her grandson, however, tried to return his two members single handed. The "other inhabitants" objected to this, the old papers were brought out, and the House of Commons with Sir Edward Coke in it as a member, decided on March 25th, 1628, that the Indenture in which the woman's name was included, was "The true and lawful form of the indenture" (see Common's Journal). This has never been contested, and remains "last precedent." It is true that opinion arose against the voting of women, and Sir Simon d'Ewes, M.P., editor of the Journal of the House of Commons, in 1640 objected to women recording their votes, though he acknowledged that "in Law they might have been allowed."

There is, therefore, no constitutional law against the women's vote, rather, as Sydney Smith puts it, "The Enfranchisement of Women is the Law of the Land."

Against the confusions and combats of the nineteenth century we must therefore set some clear facts, (1) that the House of Commons alone can judge of its own electorate, and the extramural decision of 1868 is not binding at all; (2) that no amount of desuetude, or lack of using it, deprives a person of the Franchise. Illegal custom and action, even of a century, does not do so; (3) women now seek to throw themselves back on the Constitution, and as Toulmin Smith says in his 'Early English Guilds,' we "can never appeal to our fathers in vain, when we seek the principles of solid liberty."

CHARLOTTE CARMICHAEL STOPES.

VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Women's Social and Political Union.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

OFFICE: 4, CLEMENTS INN, STRAND, W.C.

All Communications, unless marked "Private," will be opened by one of the Hon. Secretaries.

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MISS MARY E. GAWTHORPE
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The Movement Week by Week.

THE Women's Social and Political Union, profiting by the public interest aroused by recent demonstrations, are busy with election work and with organization.

The Jarrow by-election campaign is being conducted by Mrs. Pankhurst, Mrs. Martel, Miss Gawthorpe, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Baines, Dr. Jones, Miss Aeta Lamb, Miss Jessie Stephenson, Miss Dalley, Miss Daisy Bullock, Miss Alice Milne, and Miss Munro. They will be joined by others during the next few days. Their meetings are larger than those held by the candidates themselves, and the audiences are very earnest and attentive. There is but little of the rough behaviour displayed by Liberals at previous by-elections. A meeting of women householders has resulted in the formation of a committee consisting of local women, who attend the candidates' meetings for the purpose of asking questions about women's suffrage, and help in various other ways. At no previous election have the local women been so enthusiastic. Our workers have become personally known to the electors, who are eager to discuss women's suffrage with them. "Votes for women" is, indeed, the chief topic of conversation in all parts of the constituency. *The Northern Echo*, a local Liberal paper, has devoted a leading article to a criticism of our by-election policy, which fact may be taken as a proof that the Liberals are feeling the effect of our campaign and are attempting to minimise its influence on the electors. A further significant circumstance is that all the candidates claim to be ardent supporters of Women's Suffrage.

As at Stepney and at Rutland, so at Jarrow, our work is proving to the candidates and the political agents that Women's Suffrage is highly popular with the electors. Nothing could be better for the movement than a constant succession of by-elections during the next few months.

Organisation is proceeding as fast as funds and strength will permit in Scotland (under the direction of a Scottish committee) in the north-eastern district, in Lancashire, in Yorkshire, in the Midlands, in South Wales, in London, and the South. It is hoped before long to set an organizer to work in the West of England.

Until recently the North-Eastern district, with the exception of Middlesborough, was almost untouched, but now Miss Nell Kenney, acting in conjunction with Mrs. Coates Hansen, has undertaken the task of educating that part of the country.

Miss Annie Kenney is stationed in Lancashire. Part of the week she spends in one or other of the Lancashire towns in order that new branches may be formed or existing ones strengthened, and the remaining days are spent at some watering-place in order that the holiday makers may be instructed in the principles of Women's Suffrage. Members of the Manchester Union are holding meetings and canvassing in North-West Manchester,

Mr. Winston Churchill's constituency, so that in the event of a by-election they may not be unprepared.

It is intended to pay special attention to Yorkshire, as being a Liberal stronghold. Mrs. Martel is about to visit most of the Yorkshire branches, and Mrs. Pankhurst hopes to pay them a further visit later on.

In the Midlands we have three branches. The Leicester branch reports the holding of a successful open-air meeting. In Wolverhampton Mrs. Sproson holds frequent meetings, usually in Sir Henry Fowler's constituency. Her meetings were at first disturbed, but are now quite orderly and are well reported in the local press. Few places are more hopeful than Birmingham. A branch has been formed there, and frequent visits will be paid from London.

The Cardiff branch is now in a flourishing condition. Miss Adela Pankhurst and the local members have held a large number of meetings there during the past three months. The meetings for women have been particularly successful. Some work has been done in Mid-Glamorgan, Mr. Sam Evans's constituency, which is easily reached from Cardiff.

The constituencies of active opponents of women's suffrage must all be visited. Miss Lucy Dalley and Miss Millicent Browne, who have already helped in the agitation in Mr. Julius Bertram's constituency, have undertaken to spend their holidays in the constituency of Major Renton, who gave notice of a hostile amendment to Mr. Dickinson's Bill. Other friends tell us that they are prepared to hold meetings during the holidays in various seaside towns.

In the organization of London and the South, we are obliged to rely chiefly on the help of London members, since most of the organizers are at work in other parts of the country. We have made great progress in London, but many districts remain untouched. We are anxious to cover London with a network of organization, and we appeal to every member to share in this work.

Recent experience in the South of England shows that it is, like other parts of the country, ripe for Women's Suffrage. At Bournemouth Mrs. Holmes, of Croydon, addressed enthusiastic meetings. At Portsmouth a Women's Suffrage meeting, arranged by Mrs. Casher, was so successful as to surprise those who know the town.

In fact, wherever we go we find that men and women alike believe in votes for women. There has been a wonderful change of feeling during the last few months. Even in places never before visited, in great industrial centres and in quiet country districts, we discover that there is deep sympathy with our cause. But sympathy requires to be translated into political force, and for this workers are needed. Here is the one difficulty. At present workers are few. We want any number of voluntary organizers—speakers if possible, but not necessarily speakers—who will go into the towns and villages to reap the harvest which awaits them there. C. H. P.

London Branches.

At the time of going to press, news has just been received that the twenty-fourth London Branch of the Women's Social and Political Union will be formed at Beckenham on June 28th, at 7 P.M., in the garden of Mrs. Furze, 35, King's Hall Road, and judging by the energy displayed by the inaugurators of this the youngest Branch, it will in a short time be doing very useful work in gathering together members of the teaching profession, both L.C.C. and others, who are in deep sympathy with the movement.

Reports of the progress and work done by the other twenty-three Branches of the Union are most encouraging. Those who doubt the usefulness of drawing-room meetings should go to "Croydon," where the new members are almost all recruited from drawing-room or garden parties, the main object of the meetings being to get people to come out of their drawing-rooms.

Of the more recently formed Branches "Bowes Park" and "Lewisham" propose holding open-air meetings, particulars of which will be found under forthcoming events.

"Northern Heights" has adopted the excellent practice of having short speeches from its members, at their branch meetings, on the same subject—for instance, next week all will speak on "Why I want the Vote." This should prove both interesting and educational. This branch also reports that it is at present handicapped through want of a larger room for its meetings, and also through the absence of any member with sufficient leisure to efficiently carry out the routine work of the branch.

"Hammersmith," too, will hold weekly out-door meetings during July and August, and appeals for new members prepared to undertake a "vigorous campaign" in the autumn. It is hoped that the lady, who at one of their earliest meetings said she had enjoyed it as much as the theatre, but declined to join on the ground that she was not sure it was sanctified, will call again!

The "Hackney" branch, which came into existence so recently as April of the present year, is second to none in the amount of valuable work it is able to report, and its Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Elizabeth Wilks, is to be congratulated upon having found so many women able and willing to supplement the energy and initiative shown by herself. One important event was a conference with the Liberal women of Hackney on May 10th, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence acting as representative of the W.S.P.U. The outcome was the resolution by the Committee of Liberal Women of North Hackney to join the W.S.P.U. at the close of their current year. The announcement of a garden party, on June 28th, under the auspices of The Central Society for Women's Suffrage, The North Hackney Women's Liberal Association, and The Women's Social and Political Union will be welcomed by all concerned.

The "Hampstead" branch, since its inauguration in February last, has done good steady propaganda work, having had a long series of meetings, and taken much trouble to secure the services of many excellent speakers who have been much appreciated. This branch, like others, has given the best of all proof of its earnestness of purpose through the individual self-sacrifice of some of its members, to the encouragement of the others.

In the East End, where are to be found the oldest branches of the Union, the membership keeps up well, and interest in the movement is unabated. A new branch has lately been formed at Stepney as a result of the recent bye-election.

Last, but not least, the "Clapham" branch, though only a month old has given signs of a vigorous vitality which leads to great expectations for the future. An interesting feature of their meeting on June 18th, was the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Haslam from Dublin, who have championed the cause of Women's Suffrage for over fifty years. During the discussion which followed the address, attention having been drawn to the affirmation of Mr. Belford Bax that the privileges which women enjoy extend even to cannibalistic regions, the Hon. Treasurer, Miss Turquand, certainly scored when she pointed out that the suggested immunity is to be regarded not as a privilege at all, but rather as an added insult—woman, having no soul, being considered unfit for man's consumption!

Provincial Branches.

The work of the Women's Social and Political Union in the provinces has resulted in the formation of 30 branches in England and Wales, and it is significant that the majority of these, 20 in number, are located in Lancashire and Yorkshire, for it was in Manchester that the movement originated.

The Northern branches, too, are particularly vigorous. The parent one (Manchester) has lately held a very large demonstration in the St. James's Theatre, as well as numerous open-air and drawing-room meetings. Visits to the neighbouring branches of Ashton-under-Lyne, Rochdale, Bolton, and Marsden have been made by the organizers in Manchester.

Preston, though it has only been formed just over three months, has been very active, and in addition to a branch meeting each week has held eleven public meetings—"two thronged open-air meetings were addressed in the centre of the town by Mrs. Despard and Miss Annie Kenney, and these were listened to with marked good feeling and sympathy," writes the energetic local secretary. An excellent plan is being tried in Preston of holding an open branch meeting monthly by turns in a room in each ward of the town, the municipal women voters being previously canvassed. Other branches may like to follow this example.

A large and very successful meeting was held in the Birmingham Town Hall in May, and this has been followed by other good meetings and the formation of a branch which promises to form as successful a centre for work in the midlands as Manchester does for Lancashire.

The necessity for open-air meetings during the summer months must not be forgotten, and it is very satisfactory that reports of good meetings have been received from nearly all the branches, from Cardiff, Leicester, Brighton, Wolverhampton, and Long Eaton, as well as from the north country ones. The only provincial town which can boast of having two branches is Middlesborough, though the district is a difficult one to work, as there are no organised trades for women; but it is hoped that good results will be obtained from a thorough house to house canvass which is being carried on.

Letchworth, the Garden City, has, in addition to its other attractions, a vigorous young branch of the W.S.P.U., and a meeting is being arranged for July 6th, at which Mrs. Despard will speak.

Many more branches will have to be formed south of Lancashire and Yorkshire before there are centres of organised propaganda evenly distributed over the country. E. H. M.

The Scottish Movement.

In Scotland there are everywhere signs of progress. The existing branches have awakened to the need for united action if a really live and national movement is to be built up in Scotland. On June 12th the conditions of federation were settled by the delegates appointed by the branches, and a Scottish Council was formed. The new body is intended by the branches to do more than merely strengthen the movement where it already exists. The many places which now are crying aloud for organization must be immediately dealt with; and, finally, the whole of Scotland must be brought in to the W.S.P.U. fold. This is the object in view.

It is not remarkable that the branches north of the Tweed should have first decided on this progressive organization. The faults of the system of a single central body as the sole link between widely scattered branches are many, and the branches furthest away from the centre suffer most from them. The Scottish workers have discovered this, and have sought a remedy in union. They are now banded together for the work of organization, propaganda, and protest. They have appointed Mrs. I. D. Pearce their Honorary Treasurer, and, recognizing the need for immediately creating a fund for Scottish work, they appeal to all friends to forward contributions to her without delay. I have been elected to the post of Honorary Secretary, and undertake the duties with delight. The task of building up a self-

supporting and living movement in Scotland is one which is peculiarly a labour of love and pleasure to me. The freedom of women will only be won when the whole of Great Britain is covered with a net-work of enthusiastic and protesting branches formed and kept alive by such co-operative effort as Scotland has just initiated. A year ago we were struggling for life, to-day the scattered units are combining for the great provincial uprising which must come in the near future.

Miss Fraser, who has been kept on as organiser by the new Scottish Council, is now devoting two weeks to North Berwick, where Mrs. Pankhurst sowed the good seed when she was last in Scotland. Wherever the visits of leaders have prepared the way branches are now to be formed. The constituencies of Cabinet Ministers—of which Scotland has a large number—are to receive very particular attention. East Fife is to be revisited, and I am to visit the constituencies of Mr. Morley and Capt. Sinclair during July.

Some of the branches have already begun the work of outdoor propaganda, Dundee being earliest in the field, and holding sometimes three meetings in the week. The Council hopes by supplying lists of speakers to all the branches to develop this work during the present summer, and to have a universal system of weekly open-air meetings in operation by next year.

The first necessity for the work is funds, and the second personal service. We want immediate help of both kinds. Will those who can give us money send it to Mrs. I. D. Pearce, and will all other friends write direct to me at our present joint address, 139, West Regent Street, Glasgow?

T. B.-G.

Mrs. Billington-Greig at Caxton Hall.

On the evening of June 17th the Caxton Hall was filled with a large and brilliant throng who assembled at the "At Home" given by the members of the Social and Political Union to welcome back into their midst "the late Miss Billington" (to use a Zangwillism), and to present her with the last thing in type-writers as a token of their appreciation of the unique work she has done and is doing in the cause of Woman Suffrage.

Vocal and instrumental music was given from time to time. The singers were Miss Caroline Hatchard and Miss Hedwig Hantke (pupils of Madame Larkhom), and Miss Martha Cunningham. The songs were very beautifully sung and were received with every mark of pleasure.

Mrs. Despard and Mrs. How Martyn received the guests, some 400 in number, and later on, in company with Mrs. Billington-Greig, ascended the platform accompanied by several other well-known figures in the movement.

Miss Mordan took the chair at 9 o'clock, and in a racy speech declared herself the Suffragist with the longest record present, for she remembered when she was only six years old attending one of the early Suffrage meetings in company with her father. It must be evident from this that she had been properly brought up, and she was proud to add that throughout her life she had consistently adhered to the principles of her bringing up.

Mrs. Despard, who was received with prolonged cheering, made one of those fine, impassioned speeches for which she is famous. She referred constantly to the guest of the evening in terms of gratitude and admiration, and every reference was punctuated with applause. She said the Union had made such a rapid growth since its inception, had become so numerous, so strong, so widespread, had pressed into a year the work of so many years, that it would be profitable to look back on its beginnings, to consider the rock from which it was hewn. It had started in poverty and obscurity, amid the jeers of the world, and every form of discouragement. It was during those days of struggle and difficulty that Teresa Billington had been a very tower of strength. It was largely due to her splendid courage and brain power that the small band of pioneers had triumphantly brought the Union through every obstacle to its present position.

When Mrs. Billington-Greig rose to reply she was received with a storm of cheers, the whole audience standing. Her speech was marked with the well-known features: strongly repressed emotion, well-reasoned-out thought, and that total absence of sensationalism or exaggeration which compels serious

attention. She touched on personal matters, her line of future action as an official of the Union in Scotland, the past history of the agitation, its broad based beginning, its future, the necessity of a more widely extended network of organization, of the need of every part of the country being brought into line with the large centres and these strongly united to the head quarters, so that simultaneous action would be possible.

Her words woke to the full their well-known spell, and as I sat and listened I tried to analyze its merit. Is it not that she gives well-weighed utterance to well-matured thought, that her plans are strong and large, but with no detail forgotten, that her genius is that of the chess player who forecasts the game with precision, who calculates every move in advance, to whom nothing is a surprise and who leaves nothing to chance, who never trusts conjecture or acts on mere impulse? Her victories are those of the irresistible organizer, the cool head, the steady hand, the assured temperament of self-possession. She exercises an easy control over others, born of her own self-control and those restraints which belong to strength and resource. She inspires in those around her that confidence in her ruling which is the real magnetism of the born leader.

Mrs. Despard spoke of the honour she felt it to be that she was the chosen voice and hand of that meeting, and proceeded to make the formal presentation. For a moment she and Mrs. Billington-Greig stood hand in hand facing the audience, and there was something symbolic in the attitude that spoke of the means and ends of the Union to which they both belong; a union of women of all grades, ages, characters, creeds and politics, banded together in a close and loyal comradeship for the bettering of the condition of all women.

A. A.

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

From June 26th to July 3rd.

Wed.	Batley Preston, Central Hall, St. Peter's School	Mrs. Martel Miss Annie Kenney	7.30 P.M. 7.30
	Brighton, drg. rm. mtg.	Miss C. Pankhurst	3
	Brighton, evening mtg.	Miss C. Pankhurst	8
	Paddington, junction of Elgin Avenue and Watterton Road	Mrs. Drummond	8
	Fulham, 88, Shorrol's-rd.	Miss Mary Smith	8
Thur.	Preston, 224, Manchester-rd., drg. rm. mtg.	Miss Annie Kenney	3
	Preston, Rose Bud Corner, open air meeting	Miss Annie Kenney	5.30
	Preston, back of Sessions Hall, Market Place	Miss Annie Kenney	7.30
	Brixton Hall	Miss C. Pankhurst Mrs. Philip Snowden Mrs. Raphael	8
Fri.	Hackney, Garden Party (by ticket obtained from the Hon. Sec., W.S.P.U., 4, Clement's Inn)	Mrs. Pethick Lawrence Miss C. Pankhurst Mrs. Pember Reeves T. Hart-Davies, Esq., M.P.	6 6 6 6
	Preston, Fletcher-road	Miss Annie Kenney	1
	Preston, "At Home," 34, Broadgate, to teachers and local sympathisers	Miss Annie Kenney	5.30
	Preston, back of Sessions Hall, Market Place	Miss Annie Kenney	7.30
	Beckenham, Garden Pty. 35, Kingshall-road	Miss Evelyn Sharp	7
Sat.	Matlock Croydon, Garden Party, 53, Dingwall-road	Miss Annie Kenney Miss Comolan	7.30 3.15
Sun.	Matlock London, Hyde Park London, Victoria Park	Miss Annie Kenney Miss C. Pankhurst Mrs. Baldock	7.30 3 3.30
Mon.	Manchester, Tile-street London, "At Home," 4, Clement's Inn, W.C.	Miss Annie Kenney Mrs. Chatterton Mrs. Pethick Lawrence Miss C. Pankhurst	8 4-6 8 8
Tues.	London, 4, Clement's Inn Liverpool Wolverhampton, Mkt. Pl.	Mrs. Baldock Miss Annie Kenney Mrs. Sproson	8 8 7.30
	Clapham, 43, Park Hill	Branch meeting	8.30
Wed.	Commercial-road, Philpott-st., open-air mtg.	Miss C. Pankhurst	7.30

Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

OFFICE: 38, MUSEUM STREET, LONDON, W.C.

Hon. Treasurer: DR. STANTON COIT.

Hon. Secretaries: T. MORTIMER BUDGETT.

GOLDFINCH BATE.

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The Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

THE Men's League is now entering upon the fourth month of its existence, and, all things considered, has every reason to be satisfied with the progress which has been made. Its membership roll is increasing more and more rapidly as its existence becomes more widely known, and contains the names of many prominent men in all walks of life and of all shades of political sympathy. A remarkable feature of its membership is the large proportion of representatives of the legal, medical and teaching professions. The Church, Art, Literature, and Journalism (the separation of the two latter must not be held as a derogation from the dignity of either!) are all well represented.

For many reasons, and chiefly owing to the lateness of the season, it has been judged imprudent to hold a large central meeting until the autumn. Arrangements for this meeting are, however, already in hand, and the Committee hopes, before long, to make a definite preliminary announcement.

In the interval a few trial meetings have been and will be held in various parts of London. The first took place at the Holloway Hall, North Islington, on May 29th. It was presided over by Mr. H. G. Chancellor, President of the Liberal and Radical Association of North Islington. The speakers were Mr. D. S. Waterlow, M.P., L.C.C., Mr. Herbert Jacobs, Chairman of the League, and Mr. J. Malcolm Mitchell, a member of the Committee. The attendance was very large, more than fifty being refused admittance, and after a very satisfactory discussion a resolution was carried on a count by 100 to just under 50 votes.

The resolution was to the following effect:—

"That, in the opinion of this meeting, the franchise should be granted to women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men."

This resolution, which will be officially moved at all subsequent meetings under the League's auspices, and is to be regarded as the formal declaration of the League's attitude, was forwarded by a unanimous vote of the Committee to the Prime Minister and to the Leader of the Opposition.

The next meeting will be held on July 11th in Kensington Town Hall (for details see below).

Two main difficulties confront the Committee in its earnest desire to prosecute an active propaganda. In the first place the mere administrative work, coupled with the clerical labour of the office, especially during the early period of constructive organization, constitutes a very severe tax on the leisure time of the Committee, the members of which, moreover, give up many evenings to speaking at local meetings arranged by other societies. The necessity for the exercise of rigid economy has rendered it inadvisable to engage an adequate staff of clerks. In point of fact almost all the clerical work has been done by a few men who, being themselves business men, have been able to give only a few hours a day to the League's work at the very most, and this often at a very considerable sacrifice. To those whose communications have not received immediate reply, this fact must be a sufficient—as it is the only—explanation. The Committee would greatly value the help of any who could spare even an hour or two in the week to help in circularizing, the addressing of letters, and so on.

The second great difficulty is the general problem of finance. With the object of making it possible for all sympathizers to join the League, the minimum subscription was fixed at 1s. a

year, and the Committee has seen no reason to regret this arrangement. At the same time it is only right that members and intending members should realize the fact that the cost to the League of printing and postage is barely covered by the minimum subscription. While, therefore, members who cannot afford more than 1s. are cordially welcomed, the Committee would impress upon all others the necessity of generous support.

Several friends have said that they would give more if they saw the League "doing something." Now this "something" cannot be done without money, and, therefore, the attitude of such keen supporters is scarcely logical.

As a matter of fact the want of money is very urgent if the League is to enter on an effective season's work next autumn. Quite apart from the pressing necessity of improving the office arrangements, three important schemes are inevitably delayed for lack of money.

In the first place a comprehensive scheme of circularizing is now being elaborated. Leaflets and membership forms will be sent not only to those who ask for them, but also in general to the secretaries of political, educational, religious, social, and other bodies, to the press, and to representative men who are known to be sympathetic. A list of those who have made public utterances in favour of Women's Suffrage is already prepared for this purpose.

In the second place, it is proposed to issue a series of short pamphlets which, as a whole, will set forth the issues involved in the Women's Suffrage question, and the arguments on which the League bases its demand for Women's Enfranchisement. By this means we hope not only to overcome the objections which are raised by opponents, but also to provide our members with a complete armoury for public and private debate. Furthermore we shall thus make our influence felt in places which, by reason of distance and other difficulties, we cannot attack in person. We have already had the offer of admirable papers on the subject, the publication of which we have been compelled to postpone, for lack of money.

In the third place we propose to hold a large number of meetings next winter. Besides the big central meeting at which the League will officially announce its existence, local meetings are to be held wherever possible. The help of those who can assist in arranging the details of such meetings in their several localities is especially desired by the Committee which will do its utmost to provide suitable speakers if due notice is given.

Such is the programme. Its carrying out depends on the enthusiastic co-operation of our members. The cause is a worthy one; with confidence we claim a large measure of support.

The Committee wishes, moreover, to make a very definite appeal to each member of the League that he should do his utmost to bring in new members. The strength and development of such a League as ours depends ultimately on the energy of the individual member who acts as a nucleus in his own circle, and so propagates the principle which he has professed in an ever-widening area.

This is especially the case in towns outside the metropolitan district. In spite of the splendid achievements of other and older societies, it is still to a considerable extent from the unfavourable or flippant comments of the press that the movement is known. We rely with confidence on our members to give to the cause all possible publicity and to refute the false impressions and irrational prejudices which are abroad. The Committee will especially value any information which will enable them officially to correct any false statements about the League

and its policy in local newspapers. Such statements, if allowed to go uncorrected, will have a most prejudicial effect on our activities in the future.

In a word we ask that all our members will keep in close touch with the central office, that they will give us the benefit of their experiences in propagandist work, and their aid in the uphill task of fighting down the ignorance and flippant prejudice which the Women's Suffrage movement has to encounter.

This spade-work by individual members will, it is hoped, lead ultimately to the foundation of branches, or affiliated societies, in all the towns of the country. Already one strong branch has been formed at Clapham and negotiations are on foot for the affiliation of other local societies both in England and in Scotland. The Committee strongly urges that all such societies should affiliate themselves in some way to the central society. The combined strength of the whole is more than the sum of the strength of the separate bodies; this is especially true from the standpoint of our opponents who will gradually come to know that the reasonable demands of a solid body of responsible public opinion cannot be disregarded. The Committee, therefore, hopes that all existing local societies will at once communicate with the Men's League office with a view to an early concentration of forces. No ironbound system will govern such affiliation. The Committee will be glad to consider proposals of all kinds.

Should this appeal produce a satisfactory result, a proposal will be submitted to all the affiliated societies for a general conference at an early date to which all would send delegates. The value of such a conference can scarcely be over-estimated. Apart altogether from the immense importance of a free exchange of ideas originating in the diverse experience of workers in dissimilar localities, the assemblage of such a conference would produce a great effect on the mind of the public, prone as it is to answer to the stimulus of example rather than to that of abstract argument.

The above paragraphs amount practically to nothing more than an account, of a somewhat egotistical character, of the necessities of the Men's League. As this fact may seem to need explanation, it is perhaps due to our readers to state that it is not to be taken as a precedent. During the early weeks of a society's existence its activities must necessarily be devoted very largely to preparatory work of an administrative character, and its members must not be surprised if they do not hear of immediate public demonstrations. The absence of such demonstrations of vitality should be attributed not to any lack of enterprise on the part of the Executive, but to the necessity of perfecting the plan of campaign. And if the League seem to "hasten too slowly," members and friends will do well to remember that this slowness is just as trying to the patience of those who are actually at work, and that no successful enterprise is ever based on a substructure of premature and ill-considered enthusiasm.

In the next issue of *Women's Franchise* the columns occupied by the Men's League will contain several articles of more general interest. Original contributions will be warmly welcomed, as well as news of meetings, debates and the like, on the subject of Women's Suffrage.

In order to anticipate the wide distribution of literature which has already been discussed in this summary of our present position, it has been thought advisable to print our first leaflet in these columns:—

MEN'S LEAGUE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

It is almost universally recognised in this country as a fundamental principle of liberty that there should be NO DIRECT TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION. This principle is embodied in all the great franchise reforms, and has been asserted not only by all recent legislators but also by the emphatic voice of the people.

Women pay Rates and Taxes, but have no Representation.

It is further recognised in the whole tendency of political development that the existence of PRIVILEGED CLASSES is inconsistent with that liberty which is the essential feature of the British

Constitution. Absolute monarchy, aristocratic government, and to a great extent the political privileges of rank, wealth, and religious conformity have been abolished.

The Sex Privilege remains.

With the theoretical and practical reasons for and against these two principles, this League is not concerned. At the same time its Members are profoundly convinced that the civic disabilities of women are, in the light of these two admitted principles, as unjust as they are anomalous.

Certain classes of persons are disqualified from exercising the franchise, viz., criminals, lunatics, and peers of the realm, and the reasons for their disqualification are obvious. But for the exclusion of women we submit there are no sufficient grounds, and we claim that women who perform the DUTIES of citizenship are thereby entitled to its PRIVILEGES.

During the last half century the movement for the enfranchisement of women has steadily grown both in the number and in the influence of its advocates. It has received the support of political philosophers, such as John Stuart Mill, and of practical politicians of all shades of opinion. The present Prime Minister and his three predecessors have expressed themselves publicly in its favour, and more than four hundred Members of the present House of Commons are reported to be in sympathy with it. Outside the House there is unquestionably a considerable body of public opinion more or less convinced of its necessity. In other words, there can be no doubt that the question has become a vital political problem.

It is on these grounds that the Men's League for Women's Suffrage has been formed. Its object is to concentrate the efforts of men who, irrespective of any political party, are in favour of the movement, and to lay the question before those who have not hitherto considered it, or, having considered it, are still unconvinced either of the justice or of the expediency of the change proposed.

The members of the League frankly recognise that many who are convinced as to the injustice of present conditions oppose the enfranchisement of women in the sincere belief that it would prove injurious, not only to the State, but also to the best interests of women. It is impossible within the limits of this first statement to deal with all the objections which have been raised. These objections are based upon considerations of all kinds—religious, social, legal, economic, physiological; they range from the reasoned judgments of scientists and philosophers down to the unreflecting protests of prejudice and convention.

Having considered the many objections which have been advanced, we are firmly of opinion that the continuance of the injustice of present conditions involves incomparably greater dangers than their removal is thought to entail. We believe that the enfranchisement of women will give to the women of this country a new sense of interest and responsibility, which in process of time will provide in themselves and in the children of future generations a new and valuable body of citizens. We believe that their recognition of women as full citizens will enable practical social reformers—among whom women, even now, are a considerable proportion—to bring into prominence and to ameliorate the unsound conditions, social and economic, which are sapping the vital force of the nation. And lastly we believe that this will not be accompanied by a deterioration in the level of womanly excellence, or in the dignity and serenity of home life. This latter belief we base not only on the practical results of women's enfranchisement in other countries and of the extension of the municipal franchise in our own, but also on the conviction that the qualities of women are strong enough, not only to resist, but even to reform what is bad in the atmosphere of our national politics.

It is proposed in the near future to deal in detail with the questions indicated above, and we shall cordially welcome any suggestions or criticisms which will enable us to weigh fully and fairly the important issues which are involved.

FORTHCOMING EVENT.

July 11th.—Meeting at Kensington Town Hall. Among the speakers will be the Rev. R. J. Campbell and Dr. Stanton Coit. A number of prominent men have consented to give their names in support of the meeting; full particulars will be given next week. As an experiment, this meeting will be for men only. Those who are willing to act as stewards, or to sell tickets, or to exhibit bills announcing the meeting, are invited to communicate without delay with the secretaries of the Men's League, 38, Museum Street, W.C. Tickets 5s., 2s. 6d., and 1s.

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