

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1922

OBJECT : To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men ; to use the powers already obtained to elect women in Parliament, and upon other public bodies, for the purpose of establishing equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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MARRIED WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK.

By A. S. BYETT (Past President, National Union of Women Teachers).

The recent dismissal of a woman Medical Officer upon her marriage has brought prominently before the public a still unsettled question which may be formulated:—Has the married woman the right to choose her work, or has the married woman a right to payment for her work?

No one, let it be noted, has ever disputed the right of the married woman to *work*, although it is true that one of those unconscious humorists, who find scope for their talents in drawing up Government forms, described the married woman, who had only to run a home and bring up a family, as "Unoccupied"! Her 16-hour day, with frequently wakeful nights when baby needed attention, or some one of the family was sick, counted for nothing in official estimates, because it was not represented by a salary.

Unskilled Work Permitted.

There is as yet no National Balance Sheet of Well Being, on which a married woman's services would rank first in value of life, although gradually, even into Income Tax forms, a recognition of the wife's services begins to creep. But, that the woman who performs household and nursery tasks might be qualified to render skilled services of other kinds, and that, if so qualified, she should have the right to choose her form of service, and to exercise her skill in any direction, is far from being generally conceded. No one disputes this right in the case of a man. Why, then, should it be denied to a woman?

It should further be noted that no objection has been raised to the employment of married women in menial and underpaid occupations. The woman who stands over a wash-tub in a steaming laundry, or crawls on hands and knees scrubbing acres of stone flooring in public buildings, has not been dismissed, nor piously informed that such work:—

- (a) is degrading and unwomanly;
- (b) is likely to injure her and her children;
- (c) prevents her from making a "home."

It is only the skilled woman, receiving decent pay, whose welfare arouses such deep concern in the minds of public bodies that they feel compelled to guard her interests by depriving her of her salary, and the community of her skilled labour.

A teacher, expensively trained for seven years, experienced in school practice for a further period, at a time when her services would begin to attain their full value educationally, is—should she fall in love—confronted with the choice, either of sacrificing her school career, and becoming an unpaid and frequently unskilled domestic worker, or sacrificing the prospect of a husband and children of her own. We maintain—and many women have proved, especially since the War has given them the opportunity—that these careers, not being incompatible, need not be alternative. A woman can be a successful teacher, and conduct her household well. Yet some Education Authorities are still refusing to employ married women teachers.

Women in Public Service.

Medical women employed by public bodies appear to be threatened with the same penalty. Women in other public services must expect this example to be followed if it is permitted to pass unchallenged. Legal processes are costly, and the law courts in this country are dominated by men and men's ideas; but it is necessary to have such a case legally tested, in order that it may be made clear whether employers have the right to dismiss a woman on marriage or no. Where a clause to this effect is inserted in a contract, no doubt the legal right could be upheld. It then remains for women's organisations to instruct their members not to sign contracts containing this clause, and to make public the names of authorities who demand it. Above all, women need to be educated to a sense of their own value. Trained for so many generations in submission and subservience, their attitude too often resembles that of the beaten donkey: "Don't kick me, but if you will you may." It is time they began to resent the kicks and to demand a few more of the ha'pence.

Should not the woman, equally with the man, possess the right to choose her own destiny, and to be "captain of her soul"? If she choose to be "just wife and mother"—and no economic value can be placed on these services—it should not follow that no economic recognition should be given. The wife and mother earns, and should receive, part of the family income which should be hers as a wage—a salary would be hers to spend as she might choose. If she can contri-

bute to the welfare of her household by remunerative work outside, then it is surely better for her, for her household, and for the community, that she should be at liberty to do this work. The loss of skilled service is a detriment to the community, whatever may be the cause of the loss.

That the custom of dismissing married women is also, indirectly, a bar to the marriage of the more educated, and presumably more intelligent, girls and women, cannot be without adverse effect upon the general level of intelligence in the population. Great men are not born of slave mothers.

The women who submit to these relics of the days when the wife was a "chattel" are not the women to command the respect of husband and children. Have we not all come across that tragedy of family life where the mother is despised, and husband and children seek intelligent companionship elsewhere? Looking back, it seems to me such cases were more common in the days of good Victoria than they are now. The modern girl, self-respecting, self-regulated, possessing a sense of her own value which comes of well-paid work, may be to some people less attractive than the swooning, helpless, clinging creatures of the days of ringlets and crinolines; but, as a potential mother, she would win the vote of the hygienist at every point.

Free Wives and Mothers.

Are not the kind gentlemen who are so concerned about the "homes" and the "children" of these well-paid women misdirecting their sympathy? The sanctity of home, and the welfare of children, are at least as dear to the hearts of women as they are to men. The human race, through countless generations, has built up the institutions of the home and the family, and of these, women have always been the prime guardians. To suppose that women will marry only from necessity, and only make a home if by it they earn their daily bread, is to undervalue and underestimate two of the deepest instincts of womanhood. We believe that home and family stand to gain immeasurably by the advent of free wives and mothers, who enter upon these great responsibilities from choice, not under the compulsion of poverty.

Therefore we urge that marriage should not be made a penalty, nor that it should exact the sacrifice of the career already chosen. If left free, women will know how to shape their lives so as to best secure the welfare and happiness, not only of their own home and family, but also of that greater family which is the nation.

DRAMA AS A FACTOR IN EDUCATION.

By MARGARET MORRIS.

In writing to express my entire agreement with the view that dramatic art should form an important part in any scheme for the education of children, I should like also to point out that I consider it of imperative necessity that the teaching of art in all its branches should be taken more seriously.

The interdependence of the arts has never been sufficiently realised, and only by their forming a more important part in the education of every child, will their essential unity be understood and appreciated.

In practically all schools any form of art, whether music, painting, acting or dancing, is treated as a matter of quite secondary importance, if not of complete indifference. It is high time that this state of affairs should cease, and the right of every child to more rational development be acknowledged.

It should be borne in mind that the object to be achieved is not necessarily the making of an actor, dancer, or painter, but the realisation, by the child, of the powers within him, which will enable him to respond in a satisfactory manner to his environment, and give him an opportunity of learning to express himself.

Taught on these lines he will also learn to understand and appreciate the creative work of others, thus making life an altogether richer and better thing than it is at present for most of us.

As almost all children are born actors, and only lose their love for this form of expression as they become more sophisticated, it seems obvious that to use drama

as a means of developing their powers, and awakening their interest in literature, is a very obvious and natural thing to do.

Yet it is only a month or two ago that the spending of money to take children to see Shakespeare plays was decided to be "waste," the idea clearly being that an afternoon spent in this way was of no educational value.

That is as much as to say that to cultivate a child's imagination, and to allow it free development, is not education, and that to waste time and, still more, money on the effort is a mistake.

It rests entirely with the pioneer schools of the present day to show the absurdity of this point of view, and the satisfactory results that can be produced by more enlightened methods. But even the pioneer schools have not yet given to the arts their rightful place; and though something has been done, to my mind much remains to be carried out, as I am trying to show in the work for which I am personally responsible.

The instinctive love of acting found in young children is quite apart from the glamour thrown by the stage on adolescents, when love of display, excitement, and vanity come into force.

Young children will want to play at "make believe" because of their vivid imaginations, and their abundant vitality, which makes them always want to be doing something themselves, rather than watching or listening to, the demonstrations of their teachers. These qualities are vital, and should be allowed free play for their development instead of being continually repressed.

Children will throw themselves into the acting of any play within their comprehension, with unbounded enthusiasm, and develop perseverance, capacity for hard work, originality, and invention; often becoming in this way capable of writing their own plays. They also gradually realise the necessity for co-operation, unselfishness, and thoughtfulness when working with others.

They should, of course, be taught to design and make their own costumes, and all properties needed for their plays; by these means learning resourcefulness and ingenuity, besides deftness with their hands, neatness, and precision. In fact, so many qualities are thus brought into play and gradually developed, that it is impossible to enumerate them all.

Scenes from history can be made to live in the minds of children by dramatic treatment, in a way that no other method can vie with, and the study of easy plays in French or German is the very best method of acquiring a foreign language colloquially and easily.

In fact, it is difficult to over estimate the advantages of using dramatic art as an important factor in education, and it seems to me that objections can only come from those people who still have a vague idea that, in some way, for an education to be sound, it must be connected, if not with a birch rod, at any rate with strenuous and distasteful study.

The very reverse is, of course, the case, and let us hope the day is not far distant when it will be universally acknowledged that to cram a child with facts, however valuable, is not education at all; and that only knowledge assimilated with pleasure, and bringing real illumination in its train, is worthy of the name.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE. WHAT WE STAND FOR.

- (1) Votes for women at 21.
- (2) Equality of opportunity, status, and pay, with men in all professions, in business, and in industry, as well as the opening of all public offices and high positions of State on equal terms to men and women.
- (3) An equal number of women with men on all juries dealing with cases in which women or children are involved, and women magistrates on every magistrates' bench throughout the country.
- (4) Many more women Members of Parliament.
- (5) Immediate raising of the Age of Consent from 16 to 18 for boys and girls.

If you agree with the above, join the Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, London, W.C., and send in the form on the last page.

Every new member will receive a warm welcome.

INDIVIDUAL TIME TABLES.

By DR. O'BRIEN HARRIS (Headmistress of Clapton County Secondary School).

In order that a girl may (as far as the Board of Education regulations for Secondary Schools allow) work each term at subjects of her own selection, and at the stage in each for which she is ready, the following method has been adopted at the County Secondary School, Clapton—unofficially known as the Howard School. The grouping of girls in the Middle School is by Houses—i.e., by "vertical" groups of about 60, instead of by "horizontal" Forms of about 30. After the completion of the first two "Stages" of the school course—normally a year's work for a girl of 11—the pupil enters one of the five Houses—Athens, Florence, Rome, Venice, Winchester. She remains in it, with the same House Mistress, till she has taken the First School Examination at 16 or 17—a period of four or five years.

In the nine or twelve terms preceding the examination year she takes consecutively at least five "Stages" (3 to 7) in most of the school subjects, so as to be ready to begin 8, 9, and 10, the examination stages, at fifteen or sixteen.

Lest the examination bias should be too strong, she also takes a regular course in Physical Exercises, in Music, and in Handwork. The last-named includes some compulsory, and some optional, subjects. Only when these requirements are satisfactorily accomplished may she claim entrance to the examination class.

Class teaching is, as a rule, an essential part of the work; though a girl may occasionally elect to take a subject without attending the classes; but this is rare, unless she has once taken the work and failed, or cannot arrange to attend her appropriate stage.

At the beginning of term, in consultation with her House Mistress, the pupil makes out her own Time Table. Though the general Time Table is subject to alteration, as found necessary, she sometimes has to recognise that, as she cannot be in two places at the same time, she must choose between the two classes involved. As in daily life, "limits we did not set condition all we do," and, as a rule, she cheerfully concentrates on the subjects available.

In connection with each class, work is set—books to be read, exercises to be done, diagrams, maps, charts, essays to be given in—as in the old days. But the greater part of this is set at the beginning of the term. A higher standard than in pre-House days is required and reached, and often a wider range of ground is covered than has been set or suggested.

It is important to note that there is no distinction between Home work and School work. The girl, unable or unwilling to work at home, may take fewer subjects, or do the minimum in each; but she and her parents recognise that in this case she cannot, as a rule, cover the ground so quickly as if she did more work. One great difficulty of the modern parent and of the school is thus solved. As a man sows, so does he reap.

The House Mistress, who is assisted by a Deputy House Mistress, is Tutor, and to some extent Headmistress, to her 60 girls, and she gets to know them and their parents better than a Form Mistress could ever hope to do. The Subject Mistress has the advantage of having a class to teach much more homogeneous than was possible in former times.

We end, as we began, with the individual girl; but we are now in a better position to trace the course of her school life. Her social life is centred in her House, while, in her class work, she mixes with girls from other parts of the school. Her day is by no means entirely spent in attending lessons. She may have a third of it, or more, to dispose of as she thinks best for her work. Thus she may work in her House Room, or any Laboratory, Craft or Class Room available, group work being permitted. For independent study she may go to the large Central Library, where there is a well-kept silence rule. Often there are, not forty, but more, "feeding like one."

Her various stages in Handwork passed, her other subjects all cleared at least up to Stage 7, she enters on the three terms' work (Stages 8, 9, and 10) leading directly to the General School Examination of London University.

Form VI. will probably always be outside the Houses. Here the older girls, retaining their House loyalty, meet on common ground, realising the unity of the School, and the fact that they, citizens of Athens or of Rome, of Venice, Florence, or Winchester, are members one of another.

WOMEN AT HOME & ABROAD.

Scandinavian Women Engineers.

Scandinavian women go in strongly for the engineering profession, more especially in Denmark, where there are at present thirty-four girl students at the Copenhagen Polytechnic College, one of the best in the world. One Danish woman is a pioneer in electrical engineering, Countess Bille-Brahe-Selby, of Stensgaard, who is now in the East, on board the Selandia as a common sailor, in order to serve a term as electrical apprentice on board. In four years' time she will be a full-fledged engineer.

A Record Attendance.

Mrs. Edith How-Martyn, who did not seek re-election to the Middlesex County Council, put in a record number of attendances by a private member during the past year, being present at every meeting of the Council, and at 158 out of a possible 195 meetings of committee and sub-committees. Mrs. How-Martyn was the only woman member of the old Council, but there are two on the new Council—Mrs. Gertrude Barnes (South Acton) and Mrs. Flora May Baker (Hayes).

Women on the Eighty Club Committee.

Three women have been elected to the Committee of the Eighty Club—Miss Barbara Bliss (Lancashire), Miss Olga Griffith, proposed by Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., and Miss Ruth Vivian-Phillips, daughter of Mr. Asquith's private secretary. The Eighty Club has a membership of about 560 members, of whom a dozen are women.

Women in the Ministry.

Primitive Methodists are considering the institution of a Voluntary Order of Deaconesses, who will act under the direction of the minister. Their proposed powers, however, appear to be very limited, and they are to undergo a twelve months' probation before being officially recognised.

The Snake Lady.

The unpacking and handling of live poisonous snakes from all parts of the world is one of the duties of the woman curator of the reptile department at the Natural History Museum. These snakes respond to the right method of handling, and the woman curator allows them to wind round her arms.

Women Barristers' Dress.

The five Law Lords debating the question as to whether wigs or caps shall be worn by our future women barristers have decided in favour of the regulation wig and gown.

Women and Commerce.

Mrs. Purnell, the wife of a Slough coal merchant, has been made President of the Slough and District Chamber of Commerce. She is the first woman to be appointed to such a position in this country.

A Narrow Majority.

The Union House of Assembly at Capetown has rejected the Women's Enfranchisement Bill on the second reading by 55 votes to 51.

THE VOTE.

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EDITORIAL.

The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS. if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

EDUCATION AND THE GEDDES "CUTS."

BY AGNES DAWSON.

According to official documents, during the year 1920-21, a year of peace, grants amounting to 278 millions of money were made for the armed forces, while less than 60 millions were granted for Education; and Education included the upkeep of such places as the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Wallace Collection, etc., etc., etc., throughout the British Isles.

These figures in themselves are illuminating; as a speaker at a women's meeting said recently, our present Government is quite willing to pour out millions of money on the things that mean death, but cavils over much smaller grants on the things which mean life, and this will remain the attitude of Governments until women make it clear that this is not *their* way. It is women's job, and the sooner they get to it the better for the children in our schools.

In 1915, local governing bodies were told to economise; the L.C.C. forthwith began to make retrenchments, and saved more money on Education than on all their other departments of local government put together. Other local bodies followed suit, so that it is not difficult to show that already the children who had had no hand in the making of wars, and were in no way responsible for the unprecedented waste attending the then present war, were themselves to be made to pay an unfair share of the debt that was fast accumulating.

The Fisher Act.

In 1918 came a wave of patriotism; we had a Minister of Education who was himself a cultured man, and one who believed in Education, and because of that fact, lovers of little children were looking to him for the reforms in our schools which were long overdue, and it would seem they were not to be disappointed. The 1918 Education Act was indeed an Act full of promise for the days to come; even the ever-present enemies of Education were not powerful enough just then to reduce the Act to one of uselessness. But their day was coming, and with their usual astuteness they bided their time. The 1918 Act has never been administered by any one Authority, the delay has been cleverly organised, and then in 1921, when the cry for reduced taxation had become loud enough, a Committee on National Expenditure was set up. That the "five men of good will" were successful business men, and so could be relied upon for finding out wasteful leakages in national expenditure may be granted, but this is precisely what they did not find out in the Education service. They preferred rather to consider it an extravagant service, and proceeded at once to suggest the lopping off of just those branches of education that affected the workers' children most.

Now one asks very urgently what were their credentials for such a piece of work? There was not a woman amongst them, and apparently they did not consult officially any working mother, nor any woman teacher, or they would certainly not have suggested that the "Under Sixes" should be excluded from attending State-aided Schools. Those who have

watched the growing child between the ages of 3 and 6 know so well that this is the most impressionable period of the child's career. Between these ages the child does, and must, learn at a great rate, and either it will learn what is good, or what is evil, either it will get its knowledge through right channels, or through indifferent ones. Is it a matter of no concern as to what our children shall learn, or how they pick up their knowledge? Again, there is the working mother; her hands are always full up with the home-keeping, the washing, the ironing, cooking, sewing, shopping, keeping husband in health and happy, keeping children clean and well fed, and nursing the sick ones when they fall sick. Can she also do what is needed for the children's education before the age of six? These men of good will say, "when children, who had not begun their school training until six years of age, attain the school-leaving age, they do not show any appreciable difference in their attainments, or knowledge, from those who went to school at an earlier age." This, of course, is nonsense; no one has any reliable means of judging. For the last fifty years children have been going to school at 5 years of age, and so except for the children born in the homes where there is plenty of the good things of life, where mother has leisure, and where cultured help can be procured, there are no children to test.

Secondary Education.

Again, never in the history of Education has there been so big a demand for Secondary Education. The places are already too few, but whereas there should have been in the past a minimum of 25 per cent. of the places left free in Secondary Schools, that is to become the maximum of free places, and the fee-paying scholars are to pay more. Is it that those in power fear an educated democracy?

Another recommendation from this Committee is that the classes in Elementary Schools should be made larger. One sometimes fears that one's powers of imagination are so limited, that only those directly concerned can see the injustice to the children in this proposal, to say nothing of the danger to the community later on. The children of the workers have already been taught in large classes (the average of 30.4 is a myth); the writer, in her early twenties, taught a class which made an average attendance of 118 during the school year, and is at present in charge of a school where there are three 60 classes, and six other classes of 48 to 50, and that school is like unto hundreds of other schools. The children have been taught in battalions, and have been drilled in their work; they have in the past done things altogether and at the word of command. Teachers were hoping for better times, and many had already pointed the way to greater freedom for the children in the class room, and more individual work amongst them by the teacher; is this effort to be quashed?

It is true that children taught in masses find it hard to think for themselves when outside school. We should not be surprised that men and women of to-day leave their thinking to be done for them; they lost the habit of independent thought when they were drilled in large classes. Is it then that those in power are also fearing a thinking democracy?

There are other avenues which must be explored through which money can and should be saved, before the children's chances are for ever spoiled.

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NEW SCHOOLS OF EUROPE.

BY BEATRICE ENSOR, Co-Editor of *The New Era*. (An International Review of New Education.)

The term "New School" was introduced by Dr. Reddie who founded the first educational venture of this kind in 1889 at Abbotsholme in Derbyshire.

A most significant fact is, that in almost all the chief European countries there are two or three of these New Schools, which must be looked upon as educational laboratories where experiments and new methods can be tested, and, if successful, passed on to the State Schools of the Nations.

Before dealing with the different countries it may be well to summarise the various points one expects to find in a New School:—

1. Reverence for the child's individuality, and the belief that individuality can best develop through a discipline that aims at freedom.
2. Self-discipline and self-government, leading to increased individual and collective responsibility.
3. Co-education in the fullest sense of the term.
4. Vital religious teaching, consistent with the broadest tolerance for all genuine beliefs.
5. The elimination of competitive individualism, and the substitution of co-operative individualism.
6. Individual Time-tables.
7. All education provided, whether it be for the purpose of imparting knowledge, or for preparing a pupil for adult life, by development of character and right feeling, should give fullest opportunity for the exercise of innate powers of the child himself. The school curriculum should therefore be rich in character, embracing a wide field of interests, intellectual, aesthetic, social, and as a synthesis of all these, properly organised practice in handicraft.

8. The new education, rightly conducted, will serve to develop the child into, not only the future citizen, ready and able to fulfil his duties towards his neighbours, his Nation, and humanity as a whole, but also the man conscious of his own dignity as a human being, and recognising the same dignity in every one else.

9. School journeys, whenever possible, abroad. These points are therefore largely found in the various New Schools.

The movement, as already mentioned, originated in England, the inspiration for the New Schools of Europe having been mainly drawn from the school at Abbotsholme, founded by Dr. Reddie in 1889, and from Bedales School, founded by Mr. Badley. At the Caldecott School in Maidstone, the same ideals are applied to children coming from working class homes, with great success. Educational experiments along these lines are being made in many other Schools, Primary, Secondary and Private, in various parts of the country. The New Ideals in Education Conference Committee has given a great impetus to the whole movement in England, and anyone interested should read the various reports.

In France, the New Schools were largely influenced by Edmond Demolins, whose enthusiasm being evoked by Abbotsholme School, published a book entitled "A quoi Tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons," and founded the Ecole des Roches, Verneuil-sur-Avre, of which the Head Master is Monsieur George Bertier, Vice-President of the French Scout movement. This school is closely modelled on Bedales, but, unfortunately, owing to French law, which at present does not admit of co-education, except for daughters of a few of the masters, there are no girls. The Ecole des Roches has been a very bold experiment in France, its whole system differing greatly from that of the orthodox education of the French Secondary School.

One cannot speak of the French movement for New Education, however, without mentioning Miss Cromwell, a rich American woman, who has devoted the whole of her education and fortune to introducing the Montessori system into the Infant Schools of France. She has personally supervised a Montessori School at Fontenay-aux-Rose, Paris, where there are advanced and elementary Montessori classes, and where she has been able to train teachers in the Montessori method. She

has translated the Montessori books into French, and started an atelier where the apparatus is made by wounded soldiers, and has thus provided free apparatus for the Infant Schools of the French devastated area.

In Belgium the name of Dr. Ovide Decroly stands out as one of the foremost educational pioneers. He first started a school for abnormal children, and was so encouraged by the results of his method, that he opened a school for normal children. His method is largely based on the Dewey conception of education. Working independently, it is interesting to note, that Dr. Decroly has arrived at many of the same conclusions as Madame Montessori, based on the primary conception that all education should be auto-education. He differs, however, from Madame Montessori in not using any special apparatus, but rather holds that the child's native capacities and interest are best aroused through the everyday things of life, and letting the children choose for themselves, what he terms, "Centres of Interest," such as articles of food, clothing, materials, animals, garden, etc.

In French Switzerland, the whole of the new education movement is largely influenced by the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute, of which Pierre Bovet is the moving spirit. He has gathered around him an enthusiastic group of psychologists and educationists, among them Professor Claparède and Professor Baudoin (Author of "Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion").

German Switzerland has been more influenced by the German movement. In Germany, Dr. Herman Lietz was the prime mover, he also obtaining his inspiration from Dr. Reddie, of Abbotsholme. In 1898 he founded the first New School, and subsequently several others—they were called "Land-Erziehungshäuser." At present the most advanced of these experimental laboratories in Germany is that of the Odenwald School. It is situated in most beautiful country amid ideal conditions. This School is fully co-educational, boys and girls living together in small groups in different houses under the charge of a House Mother. They have adopted the full programme of Self-government, Individual Time-tables, etc. Another exceedingly interesting German experiment is in Hamburg. On April 1st, 1919, a group of Educational enthusiasts took over one of the State Schools, entirely to revolutionise it. The first condition was that it was to be free from every kind of syllabus and curriculum, and from every subject to which a "must" is attached. The School was under a Local Board—parents at first watching in astonishment and anxiety.

In Italy, excepting for the fact of Madame Montessori and the Montessori School movement, very little on the lines of New Education has been attempted, the most interesting experiments being those of Professor Salvoni, who has started an experimental school at Milan on the lines of the Dewey education, and from this has grown a small experimental school near Como.

In Austria the movement is still very much in its infancy, the first serious advance having been made only a year ago, at the time of the Reform. The new type of teaching, however, has been introduced into most of the State Schools, considerable prominence being given to handwork. Special mention, however, ought to be made of the magnificent work of Professor Cizek, of Vienna, in whose studios and workshops the children are left free to produce marvellously good works of real art and craft, with very little help or suggestion from the teacher.

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(Dept. 12) *The New Era*, 11, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

THE DALTON PLAN.

By BELLE RENNIE (Hon. Sec. of the Dalton Association).

The Dalton Plan is a scheme of educational re-organisation applicable to the school work of pupils from eight to eighteen years of age. It aims at giving to the older child that freedom for self-development which has proved so valuable in the school life of the "Infant," while, at the same time, ensuring that he shall master thoroughly the academic work required by the curriculum of his school. In explaining the second aim of the Plan, Miss Parkhurst quotes Professor Dewey, who says:—

"The aim of a democratic education is not only to make an individual an intelligent participator in the life of his immediate group, but to bring the groups into such constant interaction, that no individual, no economic group, could presume to live independently of others."

The third aim is to give "a viewpoint," since the psychological effect of presenting his work to the child in such a way as to enable him to see the goal at which he is aiming, and the various stages on the way to it, is a stimulus of a most profound and far-reaching kind.

Elasticity of Method.

The plan involves a re-organisation of school living, but no change in staff, standardisation, curriculum, or method. The plan is elastic—it can be applied to the whole school or to any part of it, and for the whole or a portion of the hours of work. Academic laboratories are established for each subject in the curriculum. With a small teaching staff, two subjects may be carried on in a single laboratory. The morning time after Scripture, until the session ends, is set aside for uninterrupted individual work, or may be used for voluntary group work. The afternoons are devoted to oral lessons, one, two, or three being given in every subject each week. The pupils remain, for convenience sake, members of standard or form groups, but the individual members of any standard or form are at liberty to work voluntarily, as individuals, or with others, on any part of the work required for their form, in any one of the laboratories, during the time set aside as "laboratory time."

The laboratory is a room equipped with everything necessary for the study of a particular subject up to the standard required by the highest form in the school. The school library is divided up between the various subject laboratories. The heads of these laboratories sit in their subject rooms as a staff of expert consultants, and assist the pupils in their work when called upon.

Organisation of the Work.

On a notice board outside each subject laboratory are affixed the "contract assignments" for every class in the school in that particular subject. Each contract assignment sets forth the ground which each member of the class is expected to cover in a school month of twenty days, and is further divided into four weekly sections. When an assignment is completed a fresh one may be asked, and is always granted, provided that, on being tested, the child is found to have completed the work satisfactorily.

The pupil is at liberty to distribute his time according to his own needs, he is allowed absolute freedom to use the laboratories at his own will, and to take his subjects every day in any order he likes. The plan encourages self-help, but also allows for the fullest co-operation. It develops a sense of dignity and responsibility, and helps the child to appreciate the value of time. From a psychological point of view, the child's attitude towards his contract assignment is very different to his attitude towards ordinary school work on a fixed time table. He now sees, not two or three subjects of special interest, but a contract in all its parts. Regardless of what it contains, the appealing, compelling thing is the idea of the contract, and the fact that he is a voluntary agent to carry it out. He is custodian, not in custody,

and he focuses his complete energies on the task in hand. Subject antipathies are usually identical with subject weaknesses; if we give sufficient time to clear up all the difficulties of the subject, we can usually eliminate the antipathy in the mind of the pupil.

Experience shows that the children are much interested in their progress. They elect to begin with the most difficult subjects, and accomplish more because they advance at their own individual rate of speed. The children are also keenly interested in the progress of their companions, and have much in common to discuss, so that the twenty days' assignment is often covered in fifteen days. It is possible for the children to become acquainted with first-rate books. They get opinions from different authors on any subject, and weigh them one against another, and the practice thus gained, in drawing their own conclusions, is most valuable. To study in this way gives equal opportunities to the bright and slow pupil, and both are able to progress without handicapping each other. The pupil receives help in his own subject difficulty at the time, and in the degree needed. The children enjoy the mental companionship provided by working together, and much creative work is possible, under conditions which make group work feasible. In the different subject laboratories the children enjoy a larger world, for they come into direct contact with specialists, and have a richer environment conveniently classified for use.

Assignments.

The assignments are very important—in fact, the plan hinges on them—for it is by their means that the pupil is given a viewpoint of his job as a whole. The assignments should all be written out a month in advance, and each assignment should be subdivided into four weekly portions. All the members of the School staff should see the whole of the assignments set.

They should not be a formal statement of a certain number of pages to be read in a given book, but more in the nature of a syllabus, which points out ground to be covered, indicates references which will be found useful, points of difficulty to be noted, and gives lists of questions to be answered, essays to be written, maps drawn, etc. In giving written work the equivalent time should be stated by saying, "this will count as one or two days' work," for this enables the child to mark on his graph the amount of work accomplished. The graphs used for checking the pupils' progress are a very important item in the working of the Dalton Plan. They are to be had from the Educational Supply Association, 42A, Holborn Viaduct, E.C., and the leaflet sent with them explains the way in which they are used.

Records of Success.

The Dalton Plan has been received with extraordinary enthusiasm in this country, where the value of individual work is becoming daily more obvious. It would be impossible to quote in the limits of a short article the opinions of the head teachers of all the types of schools which are successfully using it. I will therefore give only three:

- From the headmistress of an elementary school: "We have no subject rooms or specialist teachers, and our subject libraries consist only of such books as the children can procure, plus the teachers' small reference library, yet the working is very satisfactory, and the anticipated difficulties have been easily managed."
- From a Boys' School: "We opened this school in September, 1920, and have worked on the Plan ever since with complete success."
- From a High School for Girls: "We would on no account go back to the old days of 'chalk and talk' and spoon feeding."

Women's Freedom League.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS, W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Monday, April 24, at 6.30 p.m., at 144, High Holborn.—Mid-London Branch Meeting.

Friday, April 28, at 1.30 p.m., at 144, High Holborn.—Meeting of Organization Committee.

Friday, April 28, at 2.30 p.m.—National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Saturday, April 29, at 10 a.m.—Annual Conference, Caxton Hall.



DARE TO
BE FREE.

Sunday, April 30.—Reception to Delegates, Members, and Friends, arranged by the Mid-London and Hampstead Branches. Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C.1.

Monday, May 1, at 6.30 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Speaker: Dr. Lilius Hamilton, of Studeley College. Subject: "The National Importance of Women's Work on the Land."

Monday, May 8, at 6.30 p.m.—Public meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C.1. Speaker: Miss Belle Rennie. Subject: "The Dalton Scheme of Education, which aims at developing Children as Individuals."

Friday and Saturday, November 24 and 25.—Caxton Hall, Green, White, and Gold Fair.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Sunday, May 14, at 6.30 p.m.—Kingston Church of Humanity, Orchard Road, Fairfield West, Kingston-on-Thames. Speaker: Dr. Octavia Lewin. Subject: "Nasal Hygiene and Spiritual and Mental Development."

OUR TREASURY.

NATIONAL FUND.

Amount previously acknowledged December, 1920, £35,513 1s. 9d.	October, 1907, to £ s. d.
Amount previously acknowledged...	1,678 11 1
<i>Branch Funds, 1921—</i>	
Golders Green	1 9 6
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Hull	5 16 0
Letchworth	4 10 4
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Edinburgh	112 0 2
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	2,098 3 2

Cheques to be made payable to the Women's Freedom League, and crossed "Barclay's Bank, Ltd."

P.R. SUMMER SCHOOL.

A Summer School organised by the Proportional Representation Society, 82, Victoria Street (Flat 24), S.W.1, will be held at Wadham College, Oxford, by courtesy of the Warden, from Thursday, July 27th, to Thursday, August 3rd. The number of students will be limited.

The purpose of the School is to enable those who so desire to obtain a more complete knowledge of the different methods of election, of the various problems associated with them, and their influence upon the working of government. Practical instruction will also be given in the counting of votes according to the different types of regulations adopted in English-speaking countries.

The course of instruction will be interesting in itself, and it will be of especial value for those who are taking, or are likely to take, an active part in spreading information about Proportional Representation.

As is customary in Summer Schools, there will be opportunities for visiting places of natural beauty and historic interest in the neighbourhood. The cost, including board and lodging, will be 10s. per day (£3 10s. per full period). Early application by those wishing to attend is necessary, and should be accompanied by a deposit of 10s. for each student.

OUR OPEN COLUMN.

(To the Editor of THE VOTE).

The London County Council Elections.

MADAM,—The London County Council elections bear many resemblances to the General Election of December, 1918, and throw considerable light as to the possibilities of our present electoral system in the forthcoming General Election. I therefore venture to direct attention to the following points.

In the first place the figures for the contested seats were as follows:—

THE L.C.C. ELECTIONS, MARCH 1922.

(Contested Seats)

Party.	Votes obtained.	Seats obtained.
Municipal Reform	557,306	65
Progressives	186,202	25
Labour	380,692	16

Just as in the General Election of 1918, there is a great discrepancy between votes polled and seats obtained. The overwhelming defeat of Labour representation hides the real facts. Labour has quadrupled its total poll since 1919. It has in this new election polled more than twice as many votes as the Progressives, although in the contested areas it has obtained nine seats fewer. The Municipal Reformers polled less than one and a-half times the number of votes polled by Labour, but it secured four times as many seats.

What bearing have these figures on the General Election? Does it mean that Labour will suffer in equal degree? Who can tell? The Coalition Government in Canada recently went to the country. The swing of the pendulum was against the Coalition, and in spite of many three-cornered fights and their possible advantage to the Coalition, its great majority in Parliament collapsed. In the new Election it obtained far less than its fair share of seats.

Further, in the L.C.C. elections, the leaders of the Labour and Progressive parties lost their seats. In the general election of December, 1918, the leaders of the Independent Liberal and Labour parties also lost their seats. In the one case there was a weakening of the personnel of the House of Commons, in the latter a weakening of the L.C.C. What bearing does this have upon the next general election? Does it mean that additional Labour and Liberal leaders will lose their seats? Who can tell? In the recent Canadian General Election the Coalition Prime Minister and ten of his colleagues were swept away. Neither Coalition, Liberal, or Labour can be sure of saving their leaders in the face of a swing of the pendulum.

There is much discussion now as to the relative merits of the alternative vote and P.R. Let us test them in the light of these L.C.C. elections. The alternative vote would have made very little difference in the results. The only possible changes, if any, would have been in North Lambeth, North St. Pancras, Bermondsey, and in Whitechapel. If the alternative vote had any effect it would on balance have made the total representation of the London electors still more unjust. It would have transferred two or three seats from Labour, which is grossly under-represented, to the Progressives, who are over-represented. In the forthcoming general election the alternative vote might equally add to the unfairness of the total result, or, on the other hand, it might be as ineffective as it would have been in 1918. Further, the alternative vote would not in the L.C.C. election have saved either the Progressive or the Labour leader from defeat; in the last general election it would not have saved Mr. Asquith, Mr. Henderson, and their colleagues. In the forthcoming general election, if the swing is against the Coalition, it will not save Coalition ministers from a similar fate.

There were two other features in the L.C.C. elections worth noting. The Progressives ventured to fight only a limited number of constituencies. Secondly, they hold most of such seats as they have won by permission of another party. Issues were confused, candidates were put in a false position, and the electors were mystified. Under a proportional system there would have been a real fight in London from one end to the other. The Municipal Reform, Progressive and Labour forces would have put forward candidates everywhere. People would have understood the differences between their respective policies. If we adopt proportional representation, as we ought, for the general election, each party will be free to state clearly what its public policies are, and to nominate candidates, not here and there only, but in every constituency from one end of Great Britain to the other.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. HUMPHREYS,

Secretary.

THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SOCIETY.

SUPPORT YOUR LEAGUE.

Our funds are again at their lowest Spring level and urgently require replenishing—weekly bills must be met and rent be paid. Members and friends of the Women's Freedom League only have to be told of their League's starving condition to come to the rescue. Please send your contributions at once before you start on your holiday.

E. KNIGHT,

Hon. Treas.

144, High Holborn,
London, W.C. 1.

FRIDAY,
APRIL 14,
1922.

THE VOTE

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THE DALTON ASSOCIATION.—Hon. Sec. Miss Rennie, 35, Cornwall Gardens, London, S.W. 7, who will be pleased to give any information, and put teachers in touch with Schools using the Plan.

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