

THE VOTE.
JULY 3, 1925.

BIRTHDAY PARTY TO-NIGHT!

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.
NON-PARTY.

VOL. XXVI. No. 819.

(Registered at
the G.P.O.)

ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1925

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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WOMEN M.P.s IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

V.—MISS INGIBJÖRG H. BJARNASON, M.P.

In 1915 the women of Iceland obtained the vote, but with very considerable restrictions. The age limit was 40 years, with the proviso that every year this limit was to be lowered a year, so that after 15 years women would obtain the franchise at 25 years of age. Fortunately they had not to wait so long. Three years later, in 1918, when the negotiations between Denmark and Iceland were brought to a conclusion by a treaty,

to take place, the National Council of Women of Iceland sent a letter to the various political parties, and urged each of them to give a woman the second seat on their polling lists. Most of the parties replied that they had no chance of getting even their ablest men into safe places, and no woman was nominated to stand for election.

Then the National Council of Women took the



PARLIAMENT HOUSE AT REYKJAVIK, ICELAND.

the new constitution made men and women equal, and gave the political franchise to women at the age of 25.

The Parliament of Iceland consists of 42 members, 36 of whom are elected in different local districts. The remaining 6 are elected by proportional election over the whole island. These 6 M.P.s are entitled to sit in the Upper House, which consists of 12 members. In 1922, when this proportional election was

initiated. From the associations affiliated to it an interim committee was appointed. This committee did excellent work by nominating four women candidates. In Iceland, canvassing is very difficult. There are vast distances with scanty numbers of voters. Besides this, the elections fell at a season of the year when travelling was very arduous, so that there was no chance for the candidates to

exercise any direct influence on the voters. Letters were sent, and women urged to co-operate. A special pamphlet was issued, and sent by post to nearly every home in the country. In Reykjavik and the neighbourhood, the candidates had well-attended meetings. Contrary to the other lists, the women's list was non-party. Each of the candidates was independent, and could act on her own convictions, which appealed favourably to those men voters who had got tired of party controversies. But what first and foremost made this experiment of the women turn out such a great success was the fact that number one on the list was one of the very ablest women of the country. This lady is Miss Ingibjörg H. Bjarnason, Headmistress of the National Girls' College. Miss Bjarnason is in the foremost rank of educationists, and many are the improvements the College has had during the 18 years of her leadership. Her interest in education has entitled her to be the Convener of the Parliamentary Educational Committee, which has proved very advantageous indeed. Besides this, Miss Bjarnason has sat on the Financial Committee, a position which in these years of economical depression is anything but easy.

During the last session, the Parliament has had to decide on laws intimately concerning women and children. The whole body of laws regarding the contracting and dissolution of marriage, guardianship of legitimate children, legal position of children born out of wedlock, etc., has undergone radical alterations. In all these matters Miss Bjarnason has been active. In her, those who are most affected by these laws have had the best of advocates.

The improvement of the sanitary system is a subject that lies close to the heart of the women of Iceland. To enable medical students to complete their studies at home, give nurses a perfect training, and to lessen the shortage of infirmaries, an up-to-date hospital is very sorely needed. In commemorating their franchise in 1915, women all over Iceland founded a hospital fund, with Miss Bjarnason as its President. Although this fund has grown quickly, it is far from large enough to bear all the expenses of the building of a hospital. Miss Bjarnason is using all her influence to persuade Parliament to grant the necessary funds, and it is to be hoped that her endeavour will be crowned with success.

The second name on the list of women Parliamentary candidates at the 1922 elections was Miss Inga L. Larusdóttir, who has been accordingly appointed an alternate to Miss Bjarnason, though she has not yet sat in Parliament. Miss Larusdóttir was one of two Icelandic delegates who attended the Quinquennial Conference of the International Council of Women at Washington in May. She is President of the National Council of Women of Iceland, and since 1915 has edited a woman's paper entitled "19 Juni" (June 19th), which she publishes at her own expense. The title of the paper represents the date, in 1915, of Icelandic women's enfranchisement.

In a recent interview with a representative of THE VOTE, Miss Larusdóttir gave some interesting facts with regard to the position of women in Iceland. "There are at least a dozen women's societies," she said, "whilst the system of coeducation which is generally practised in the country has engendered a feeling of comradeship and co-operation between the sexes." According to Miss Larusdóttir, there is no single office or position in Iceland which is not open to women. The Church, which in every other country in the world has closed its doors against women, has been open to them, in Iceland, since 1911, although no woman has yet come forward with the necessary theological qualifications for ordination. Women outnumber men in Iceland in the teaching professions, and they also work freely in the Civil Service, in post-offices, banks, etc. There are a few women doctors, but no women lawyers as yet, though the law is accessible.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Women for Bisley.

Among the thousands of competitors who have entered already for the various matches during the N.R.A. meeting at Bisley are a number of women. No woman is allowed to shoot for the King's and Prince of Wales's prizes, which are restricted to Service or ex-Service men. The women propose to tackle the All-Comers' Event, which will bring them into competition with a score or more of gold, silver, and bronze medallists. The women already entered are: Miss Williams and Miss Wales, from the Prudential Insurance Company Ibis Rifle Club; Mrs. Barnes, of the Manchester Rifle Club; Mrs. Muirhead, Miss Muirhead, and Miss Foster, of the South London Rifle Club.

Artist F.Z.S.

An interesting new Fellow of the Zoological Society is Dorothy Burroughes, that clever animal artist whose posters have so long brightened London on the Underground Railway. Miss Burroughes, who lives with Vere Hutchison, the novelist, has a library of animal books, and studies hard there, from Nature, and at the museums and Zoo. Her "White Monkey" cover to Galsworthy's book is well known to most of us.

A Long-delayed Degree!

Mrs. August Hagenow, who matriculated as a student at the University of Nebraska 49 years ago, has just received her degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts. She registered at the University in 1876, but left the same year to get married. She has now seized the opportunity of obtaining her long-delayed degree.

Mrs. DESPARD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY.

FOURTEENTH YEAR.

COME TO THE PARTY.

CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER,
FRIDAY, JULY 3rd., at 7.0 p.m.

7. Chair: Mrs. Mustard. Mrs. Despard will receive the Guests.

7.45. Short Musical Programme. Songs and Recitations.

8.15. Short Speeches by Miss Munro, President of the League; Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., Miss Horniman.

PRESENTATION OF THE BIRTHDAY GIFT FOR THE WORK OF THE LEAGUE.

Mrs. DESPARD'S BIRTHDAY TALK.

Refreshments. Ices, Strawberries and Cream, Welsh Produce. Flowers. Pound Stall.

TICKETS 1/-.

Mrs. DESPARD'S BIRTHDAY FUND.

If you have not already sent your contributions to the Birthday Gift bring it to me at the Party, or post it as soon as you read your "Vote"—do not be left out of the list. We must have our Treasury full for the Campaigns that are in hand.

Big and little amounts are all received with gratitude.

E. KNIGHT.

144, High Holborn, W.C.1. Hon. Treas

IN PARLIAMENT.

Juveniles (Committee of Inquiry).

MAJOR CADOGAN (U., Finchley) asked the Minister of Labour if any steps had been taken to set up the promised Committee of Inquiry on Juvenile Unemployment? The PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (who had been asked to reply) said that his right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour and himself were appointing a Committee with the following terms of reference: "To inquire into and advise upon the public system of education in England and Wales in relation to the requirements of trade and industry, with particular reference to the adequacy of the arrangements for enabling young persons to enter into and retain suitable employment." They hoped to be in a position to make an announcement as to the personnel of the Committee at an early date.

The Women's Freedom League at once wrote to Lord Eustace Percy, Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, and the Duchess of Atholl, urging the importance of suitable experienced women as well as men being included in this Committee, and asking them to remember that there were many thousands of girls unemployed as well as many thousands of boys.

Women Clerks' Fares.

MR. MARCH (Lab., Poplar, S.) asked the Minister of Health if his attention had been called to the inconvenience and hardship imposed on the women clerks employed in the central index register section of the National Health Insurance by the recent transfer of that Department from Westminster to Bromyard Avenue, Acton, owing to the long journey to Acton, taking in many instances upwards of three hours each day, and costing from 8s. to 10s. per week in fares, which had to be paid out of their salary of 35s. per week, which after other deductions were made for health and unemployment insurances did not leave those women with a sufficient amount for their maintenance; and would he look into the matter with a view to redress? SIR KINGSLEY WOOD (Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health) replied that the work in question had recently been transferred from the Central Index Committee to his Department on an agency basis, and the offices at Acton were the only offices available to the Department at which it could be efficiently performed. The officers mentioned by the hon. Member, who formed part of the staff of the Central Index Committee engaged on a weekly basis, had been given the opportunity of continuing the work under the Department in a temporary capacity, and had been at the same time informed where the work would in future have to be done. With few exceptions they accepted the work on that condition, and while his right hon. Friend sympathised with any individual cases of hardship, he was afraid that he could not see his way to take any action in the matter.

Legitimacy Bill.

MR. T. THOMSON (Lib., Middlesbro', W.) asked the Prime Minister if it was the intention of the Government to pass into law before the House rose for the Autumn Adjournment the Legitimacy Bill brought down from the House of Lords last May? The PRIME MINISTER replied that in the present state of public business he could not give any definite undertaking in regard to that Bill. MR. THOMSON inquired if the right hon. Gentleman was able to say anything as to what might happen after the Adjournment for the Autumn? The PRIME MINISTER said he thought, perhaps, that that question could be put down again.

Birth Control.

MR. THURTLÉ (Lab., Shoreditch) asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the national importance of the matter, he could see his way clear to give the House an opportunity of directing that maternity centres provided at the cost of public funds should be free to give information on birth control to such married women as might desire it? The PRIME MINISTER replied that in the

present state of public business it would be impossible to find time for this, unless an opportunity should arise on the Estimates on the Ministry of Health. MR. THURTLÉ inquired if the right hon. Gentleman was aware that there was a very general desire in all parts of the House that the question should be discussed at an early date? (Hon. Members, "No!") LADY ASTOR asked if the Prime Minister was aware that it was a controversial subject? MR. SPEAKER intervened by saying that the matter could not be debated now.

British Delegation (Assembly League of Nations).

MAJOR CRAWFURD (Lib., Walthamstow, W.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the British delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations would be composed, as in former years, of representatives of the political parties; if a woman would again be a member of that delegation; and if he could say when he hoped to be in a position to announce the composition of the delegation? MR. AUSTIN CHAMBERLAIN replied that the composition of the British delegation to the next Assembly was not yet determined. It must depend to some extent upon the character of the agenda which the Assembly had to consider. MAJOR CRAWFURD asked if the right hon. Gentleman would give an answer to the second part of the question, whether there would be a woman member of the delegation? MR. CHAMBERLAIN said he anticipated there undoubtedly would be, but he begged that he might not be asked in detail how the delegation was to be composed until His Majesty's Government knew the subjects the delegation would be called upon to deal with, and were in a position to form the British delegation accordingly.

Criminal Lunatics.

MR. CASSELS (U., Leyton, W.) asked the Home Secretary how many men and women were now detained as criminal lunatics, and how many of those persons were married? SIR WILLIAM JOYNSON-HICKS replied that there were at present 660 men and 205 women in detention as criminal lunatics. He could not say how many of them were married.

Domestic Servants.

CAPT. GARRO-JONES (Lib., Hackney, S.) asked the Minister of Labour how many permits were issued in 1924 for the immigration of alien domestic servants; and by what factors he was guided in the consideration of applications? MR. BETTERTON (Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Labour) replied that permits in respect of 1,230 alien domestic servants had been issued in 1924. In considering those applications he was guided, among other considerations, by the evidence available in each case as to the efforts made by the employer to find suitable labour in this country, and whether the wages to be received were at least equivalent to those normally received by British subjects for similar work.

Imperial War Museum (Women's Work).

LADY ASTOR asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury when additional space was to be provided for the Imperial War Museum, so as to enable models and other exhibits commemorating the work of women in the war to be shown to the public? MR. GUINNESS referred her to the answer given to Capt. Gee on the 16th June, which was: "The question of providing additional accommodation is now under consideration, but it will not be possible to arrive at any final decision on the matter until there has been an opportunity to consult the new governing body of the Imperial Institute, among others." To CAPT. GEE's further inquiry if that would be in a fortnight's time, MR. GUINNESS said he did not think that the new Governing Body would be constituted so soon, but he would communicate with the hon. and gallant Member on the point.

F. A. U.

THE VOTE.

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NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—
To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.
To the Secretary—on all other business, including **VOTE** orders,
printing, and merchandise, etc.

Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.

Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

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 stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS.

The Women's Freedom League has strongly advocated for many years the granting of pensions to widows with dependent children—pensions sufficiently large to enable the mother to bring up her children as decent citizens, without being obliged to go into the labour market or to the Guardians to supplement those pensions. We have done this on the understanding that these pensions would be non-contributory, because we believe that the charge for them should fall upon the State as a whole, and not only on one section of the community. The present Government, however, has brought forward a Contributory scheme of pensions for widows and fatherless children, the scale for widows (with or without children) being ten shillings a week. If there are children under 14 years of age five shillings a week is to be granted for the first child under that age, and three shillings for each subsequent child. It cannot be maintained that a woman with two or three children will be able, in these days of high prices, to keep herself and her children on the allowances made her without finding some other means of supplementing these grants; and recommendations are being made in various quarters that childless widows, if they are fairly young and able-bodied, should not be granted a pension, or if they are granted anything should have a lump sum, say £50, and no more; the savings effected in this way to be added to the allowances for dependent children. We ourselves do not think that these savings would amount to a great deal, and that they would have little appreciable effect on those allowances. Moreover, although under a non-contributory scheme of pensions we would certainly not have advocated that any woman merely because she had married and had become a widow should have a pension from the State, we think that under a compulsory insurance scheme the matter is entirely different. The Government's Insurance Scheme is quite definitely a tax on industry for the benefit of industrial workers and their dependents. Under this scheme Old Age Pensions for Insured persons will begin at 65 instead of 70, and "pensions at the rate of 10s. a week will be paid to the widows of insured men, such pensions being payable, except in case of re-marriage, till the age of 70, and attracting the same right to an Old Age Pension without the application of the 'means test' or other of the present statutory conditions"—this pension being in addition to the allowances for children under 14 years of age. We have to remember that under any insurance scheme someone has to take a risk. It may happen that a man insures his life and dies a week or two afterwards when the Insurance Company has to pay out on his policy. In every insurance scheme there must be a sense of security, and under the Government's scheme a man pays 4d. a week extra to his present contributions and his employer another 4d. a week, so that if he dies his widow and children will receive certain benefits, and if he lives, and his wife also lives, they will both receive a pension of 10s. a week at the

age of 65, without a "means test." Under the same scheme a woman worker pays 2d. a week extra and her employer 2d., and for that contribution will receive a pension of 10s. at the age of 65. It does not seem that a woman worker will get as much benefit for her 2d. a week as a married man may get for his 4d. a week, and it is pointed out that a childless woman with a pension may, under the provisions of this scheme, be enabled to compete unfairly in the labour market against the unmarried woman contributor. We would point out that under any contributory insurance scheme, and more especially under a Compulsory Contributory Scheme, there are bound to be certain hard cases inherent in the scheme itself, but the last thing one wants to do with it is to undermine any sense of security that its contributors generally have in it; and if a man's insurance contributions are specifically for the benefit of his widow and children, we hardly think it wise to suggest that widows under certain circumstances should be deprived of benefit. Other means should be considered for securing full benefits for the insurance contributions of unmarried women workers, and for preventing unfair competition against them in the labour market by young widows with pensions. The State also, from taxation, should provide extra benefits for dependent children so that the mother is not obliged to supplement her income in the labour market in order to bring them up as decent citizens. We must remember, too, that the vast majority of women lose their market value in professions and in industry when they marry, and if they return, after a number of years, to industry or their profession they will probably find it difficult to secure work, and will very likely have to accept the lowest-paid grades of that work. Nor can we forget that, even if they are able and willing to continue their work after marriage, the Government and Local Governing Authorities refuse to employ them, and many other large employers of labour follow their sinister example. Again, in this country a man is allowed by the law to will all his money away from his wife and leave her practically penniless at his death. In our view, women take a good many economic risks when they marry, and we cannot see any justice in defrauding an insured man's widow of 10s. a week which has been paid for beforehand out of the family budget, even if she is fairly young, able-bodied and childless. Women ought to insist however, that Clause 6 shall be amended. This Clause provides that where certain representations are made to the Minister of Health by the Local Authority or from any Court, or otherwise (*the italics are ours*), the pension for herself and the allowances for her children may be paid to a third person. We hold that unless it is proved conclusively preferably by a Court of Law, that a woman is an unfit person to have the custody and guardianship of her children, the money should be paid to her, and not to a third person; and we certainly protest that or otherwise should be deleted. Such a phrase can lend itself to many abuses. Regulations which do not apply to other pensioners ought certainly not to apply to widows under the above scheme (whether with or without dependent children).

PRISON APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. John Taft, formerly a warden and afterwards Chief of Staff of H.M. Borstal Institution, Feltham, has now been appointed Governor of this Institution. Col. L. W. Johnston, whom Mr. Taft succeeds at Feltham, has been promoted to be Governor of Wormwood Scrubs Prison, in succession to Major Goldie Taubman, who has been made an Inspector of Prisons. We again urge the necessity for the immediate appointment of women as General Inspector and Medical Inspector of Prisons. We think it is absurd and quite out of harmony with the spirit of reform that men alone should continue to be appointed as Governors and Deputy-Governors of women's prisons and women's sections of prisons, and that there should still be no woman Inspector of women's prisons and no woman Medical Inspector of Prisons. No wonder that there are so many women recidivists!

WHY WOMEN ARE NEEDED on the SLAVERY COMMISSION of the LEAGUE of NATIONS.

The Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations, to which the Women's Freedom League is affiliated, has been urging that women should be appointed to the Slavery Commission of the League of Nations since the establishment of such a Commission was first suggested in 1923. So far all efforts have been unsuccessful, and the Commission actually set up in March, 1924, is composed entirely of men. The excuse given for the omission of women is that it is a Commission of experts only, and there are no women experts on the subject of slavery.

This means that the men serving on the Commission have been appointed because they have had to do with colonial administration, and know the difficulties likely to be encountered in the various parts of the globe where slavery still exists. While this particular knowledge is no doubt necessary, it is strongly felt by women who have gone into the matter, that some corrective to the official mind is equally necessary, and that corrective may be best provided by the appointment of a woman who would bring to the Commission a broader and less conventional outlook.

A glance at the following programme of the work of the Commission will convince any reader of THE VOTE, of the injustice of leaving this work entirely in the hands of men.

In the first instance the Secretary General of the League issued a questionnaire to the various Governments in whose dominions slavery in one form or another was reported to exist. They were asked to state:

1. What measures had been taken to suppress slavery?
2. What had been the economic and social results of these measures?
3. Whether further measures were in contemplation.

The Commission set up to examine these reports were puzzled from the outset as to the scope of their inquiry, and came to the conclusion that the Council of the League had been purposely vague, leaving it to the Members of the Commission, as experts, to formulate their own programme. The Commission, therefore, suggested to the Council that their inquiry should cover the following ground:

1. The enslaving of persons.
 - (a) Slave raiding and the slave trade.
 - (b) Slave dealing (including the transferring of slaves by exchange, sale, gift or inheritance).
 - (c) Slavery or serfdom (domestic or predial).
2. Practices restrictive of personal liberty, or tending to acquire control of the person in conditions analogous to slavery, as for example:
 - (a) Acquisition of girls by purchase disguised as payment of dowry, it being understood that this does not refer to normal marriage customs.
 - (b) Adoption of children, of either sex, with a view to their virtual enslavement and of the ultimate disposal of their persons.
 - (c) All forms of pledging or reducing to servitude of persons for debt or other reasons.
3. Measures to check above practices.
4. System of compulsory labour, public or private, paid or unpaid.
5. Measures taken or contemplated to facilitate the transition from servile or compulsory labour to free wage labour or independent production.

As regards the adoption of children, it was plainly stated that the object was frequently to acquire concubines when the children grew up. But it is in the question of domestic slavery that official timidity is likely to be most apparent. The Belgian Government defined this particular kind of slavery as: A condition consecrated by native custom in which, either by the will of another person, or by birth, or sometimes of his own free will, a person is placed in relation to another in a position analogous to that of the goods and chattels of the latter. Distinct from slavery, it only affects the natives.

It is clear that the work of the Slavery Commission covers a wide field, and calls for other knowledge than that acquired by the administration of Colonial Possessions.

A determined effort is being made to get the question of the appointment of a woman to this Commission raised at the 6th Assembly of the League.

LEONORA DE ALBERTI.

(Hon. Sec. Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations.)

"THE FEMALE PARLIAMENT."

In a recent issue of the *Morning Post* is an extremely interesting article under the above heading. According to the writer, in the year 1780, weekly debates on set questions were the chief diversions of the fashionable set in society, and took place at Carlisle House, Soho Square, Mr. Greenwood's Rooms in the Haymarket and at the Casino, Great Marlborough Street. Cox's Museum, in Spring Gardens, so well described in "Evelina" became the Oratorical Hall, and the King's Arms at Kensington set up the Female Congress, the debates being for men only, mixed, or for women only. We are told that the latter attracted large and fashionable audiences, although there were apparently no star speakers. The galleries were reserved for women exclusively, the body of the hall being open to both sexes, and those who wished to take part in the discussion, men or women, were asked to sit in the centre of the hall. It seems that the subjects to be debated were duly advertised in the *Morning Post*, and, as our readers will agree, the following reproduction makes interesting reading:—

"THE UNIVERSITY for RATIONAL AMUSEMENTS CASINO, No. 43, Great Marlborough Street. THIS Evening will commence the First Sessions.

The FEMALE PARLIAMENT.

The Debates to be carried on by Ladies only, and a Lady to preside in the chair. Question for this day—Is that assertion of Mr. Pope's founded on justice which says 'Every woman is at heart a rake'?

The doors to be opened at Seven. The Chair to be taken at Eight. Admittance 2s. 6d. Refreshments of Tea, Coffee, Capellaire, Orgeat, &c., included."

The writer says it is well worth noting that these debates, which were not taken very seriously at the time, gave women one of their first opportunities of voicing their political aspirations. The following are given as a few of the subjects debated:—

"What reason can be assigned for precluding the Fair from the privileges of civil society, or from a liberal participation in their discussions?" (A mixed debate.)

"Would it not greatly conduce to connubial happiness if the means of total separation were less difficult than at present, and within the abilities of all ranks and situations?"

It is further stated that many other questions discussed show a reaching towards full civil rights for women. Among other lighter topics are some reminiscent of our "Silly Season," such as:—

"Was Adam or Eve more culpable in Paradise?"

"Do the manners of the Ladies in the present day tend more to invite the Gentlemen TO—or deter them FROM matrimony?"

"Is the Diffident or the Resolute the most persuasive Lover?"

"Is not a liberal acquiescence with the prevalent fashion in the improvements of the person as necessary as an attention to the cultivation of the understanding?"

"Whether the depravity of the times is owing to dissipation in the men or levity in the women?"

"Which is the better preservative of Female Virtue, Freedom or Restraint?"

"Is the Effeminate Man or the Masculine Woman the more contemptible character?" The *Morning Post* contributor points out that the "Masculine Woman" of that year was one who wore certain newly invented garments, irreverently referred to in the Press as "bricks" or "breeks."

WOMEN AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

Last Monday, a Prime Minister and ex-Prime Ministers, the Minister of Labour and an ex-Minister of Labour, and hon. Members belonging to all political Parties, discussed the following resolution, moved by Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald in the House of Commons:—"That this House has no confidence in a Government which, after a lengthy period of industrial depression, and confronted by a rapid and alarming growth in the numbers of unemployed, has failed to take measures to deal with a situation of unprecedented gravity," this Resolution being at the close of the speeches lost by 373 votes to 143. Whatever comfort or help unemployed men may get out of that discussion, we doubt whether, as a result of it, one woman will be found a job. The numbers of women and girls registered as unemployed in this country continue to be in the neighbourhood of 205,000 and 26,000 respectively, and before the above-mentioned Debate took place the Women's Freedom League wrote to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour, and the heads of the various political Parties, asking them to remember unemployed women in their discussion, and the necessity of devising schemes of work for them as well as for unemployed men. Apparently only two Members specifically mentioned workless women in this Debate. The first was CAPT. O'CONNOR (U., Luton), who said:—"There are 88,000 women between the ages of 18 and 25 who are at the present moment unemployed. Most of these people, it is reasonable to think, have never really learnt a trade and have never been apprenticed to anything. . . . Owing to prejudice aroused, and purposely aroused in many cases, against domestic occupations, there is, at the same time, and side by side with all these young women, a considerable shortage of domestic labour from one end of the country to the other. This is another line of supply and demand we want connecting up." He also suggested that any woman who undertook domestic service permanently should thereafter be entitled to unemployment relief benefits. MISS WILKINSON (Lab., Middlesbrough, E.) was the other Member. She said: "I will deal very briefly with the question of unemployment among women. It is one of the tragedies that there are no unemployment schemes for women. Here you have all these women unemployed, and no schemes whatever to meet their needs. I know I shall be told that there is a large demand for skilled domestic servants. In many cases the unemployed women are skilled workers or women used to factory conditions, and they would be hopelessly unsuitable in any kind of domestic service. We have had schemes for training the women in domestic service, but they do not solve the problem. It is ridiculous to say that every woman can become a domestic servant. There ought to be at the Ministry of Labour some kind of committee or small department to look into the question of finding a new outlet for that kind of women's labour which was called into the labour market very largely as a result of the War. Owing to the enormous depression, you have thousands of women who must earn their own living, but cannot get work to do. There is an enormous possibility for women's labour in the proper development of the telephone system. Three or four times the number of women now employed could be employed. At least let us explore these practical matters in order to get a certain number of people back to work."

AN INIQUITOUS SYSTEM.

Writing in *La Française*, June 13th, Madame Gemahling states that a three days' grand gymnastic display was recently held at Strasbourg, in which sixteen thousand gymnasts, boys and men, aged from 12 to 30 years, and coming from all parts of France, and some even from countries outside France, took part. They were accorded an enthusiastic welcome, and the vigour, prowess, and endurance of the youths won universal admiration. But there was a tragic side to this matter. Strasbourg possesses twelve houses of ill-fame, given over to the traffic in vice under the administration of the police authorities, a whole street of them situated in the centre of the town, only 200 yards from the University itself, and a less distance from several schools, and for three evenings great numbers of these lads, some of them between 12 and 13 years of age, but the majority between 16 and 18, resorted to these houses. It is true that several men, fathers of families, professors, students, doctors, engineers, etc., tried to dissuade the youths from entering these places, especially the youngest of them, but hundreds eluded them; and one of the onlookers, a foreign journalist, after interrogating two of the youngest participants in those revels, exclaimed, "That is the way to destroy a nation!" The police made not the slightest effort to stop the lads from going to these houses, notwithstanding appeals made to their chiefs by the citizens; indeed the police were not present during those three evenings. Madame Gemahling says that there is not a woman, certainly not a mother, who can learn of these facts without the deepest indignation and regret. She rightly points out, however, that indignation is not sufficient; it is the system which must be altered. Here were twelve houses of ill-fame under the care of the administrative authority; twelve houses "supervised" by the police, offering an illusory but attractive hygienic guarantee of immunity from physical harm. How was it possible to keep such establishments from the view and use of thousands of young people in quest of amusement and novel attractions? The greatest scandal was not the momentary weakness of authority, but rather the existence in their midst of organised prostitution which excited and let loose the lowest human instincts, and by that means afterwards rendered all intervention and effective repression impossible. She urges all feminists to rouse themselves to make sure that this lesson shall not be lost, and to attack unceasingly the root cause of the trouble until they have secured the abolition of the system of regulated vice in their country. She also points out that France alone of the great nations has preserved a system which almost the whole of Europe has discarded as odious, useless, and dangerous. England was the first to abolish it. Sweden, Norway, Holland, and Denmark followed. Every day this system is losing its hold in Germany; Italy is superseding it with a system of free treatment of venereal disease; and, nearer home, Belgium has suppressed the regulation of vice in Brussels and Antwerp.

We send our heartiest good wishes to French suffragists for the success of their struggle to secure the abolition of regulated vice in their country.

W.F.L. PAMPHLETS.

- "British Women M.P.s (brought up to date), by D. M. Northcroft 4d.
- "The Work for Women M.P.s," by Mrs. Helena Normanton, B.A. 3d.
- "The Need for Women Members of Parliament," (Second Edition), by Mrs. How Martyn, M.Sc. 3d.
- "Women's Right to Work," by Miss Lind-a-Hageby 3d.
- "Women and Income Tax," by Mrs. Ayres Purdie (Certified Accountant) 3d.
- "Race Motherhood. Is Woman the Race?" by Mrs. Montefiore 6d.
- "Women Police," by D. M. Northcroft 1d.
- "Women at Work in the League of Nations," by D. M. Northcroft (Second Edition) 6d.
- "The Wrongs of Married Women," by Mrs. M. W. Nevinston, J.P., L.L.A. 3d.
- "The New Humanism," by Laurence Housman 6d.
- "What we have and What we want," by Muriel Pierotti 3d.

Women's Freedom League.

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WHERE TO GO.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, July 3rd, at 7.
Birthday Party at Caxton Hall.

Saturday, July 4th, at 10.
National Executive Committee Meeting at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Wednesday, July 8th, at 8.15.
Minerva Club Branch. The Club's Birthday Meeting. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Dr. Knight, and others. Music. Coffee.

PROVINCES.

DARE TO BE FREE.

Tuesday, July 7th, at 8.

Public Meeting at the Winter Gardens, Deal. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, on "The Ideals and Aims of the Women's Freedom League," Councillor Mrs. Percy Edgar, Dorington Boyle, Esq., and others.

Monday, July 13th, at 3—6.

Middlesbrough Branch. Garden Party at "Agecroft," Linthorpe (by the kindness of Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P.). Tickets 6d.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Friday to Monday, July 3—6th.

Labour Co-partnership Association. At Newnham College, Cambridge. Week-end Conference. July 4th, at 8. "Co-partnership: Social and Moral Standards in Industry." Speaker: Mrs. Sargent Florence. Chair: Mrs. Winttingham.

Thursday and Friday, July 9th and 10th, at 10 and 2.15.

British Commonwealth League. Conference at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on "The Citizen Rights of Women within the British Empire." (See notice.)

Wednesday, July 15th—17th.

Women Engineers' Conference at Wembley.

July 20-27th.

World Federation of Education Associations. Edinburgh.

Thursday, July 23rd, at 3.30.

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Garden Party at Aubrey House, 11a, Aubrey Walk, Kensington, W.8 (by kind permission of the Misses Alexander) in honour of Dame Millicent Fawcett, C.B.E. Tickets 2/6 (including tea).

BRANCH NOTES.

PORTSMOUTH.

The weather was perfect for the Garden Whist Drive on Thursday, June 25th, by kind invitation of Mrs. Slatter. The tables were all filled, and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Slatter for the very nice tea she provided, and to Mrs. Sawyer and Mrs. Whetton, who kindly gave the prizes. Half the proceeds are to go to the Birthday Fund, and half to the Branch Funds. Members are again being asked to subscribe at least 1s. each to Mrs. Despard's Birthday Fund. Mrs. Brading, 25, Shaftesbury Road, or Mrs. Whetton, will be pleased to receive it. Gratefully acknowledged:—Mrs. Brading, 2s.; Mrs. Sawyer, 1s.; Miss Brine, 1s.; Mrs. Whetton, £1.

(Hon. Sec.) Mrs. WHETTON, 89, Festing Grove, Southsea.

ASHFORD.

The Annual Meeting was held at "Glengarriff," Albert Road, Ashford, last Friday. Mrs. Knock presided. The Annual Report was read by Mrs. F. Knock. The balance sheet showed that there was a deficit of about 6s. The election of officers and committee took place. Mrs. Kither were again delighted to welcome as the President; Mrs. Goldsmith was elected Vice-president; Mrs. Palmer, General Secretary; Mrs. F. Knock, Minute Secretary; and Mrs. Goldsmith, Hon. Treasurer. The Committee were re-elected en bloc.

(Org.) Miss M. L. WHITE, 8, Holmsdale Gardens, Hastings.

MINERVA CLUB.

Heartiest congratulations to Miss Enid Fielding, one of our Minerva Club members, who has just won the Second Prize of £200 in the *Daily Graphic's* Colleen Moore Ambition Competition, in which £1,000 in prizes was offered to ambitious women and girls. Miss Fielding's ambition is to be a dress consultante, to help women to make the most of small sums at their disposal for dress.

OUR NEW PAMPHLET.

Buy our new pamphlet at the Birthday Party, by Miss Muriel Pierotti, entitled "What we have and What we want," price 3d.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE CONFERENCE.

"THE CITIZEN RIGHTS OF WOMEN WITHIN THE BRITISH EMPIRE."

CAXTON HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER, JULY 9th and 10th.

July 9th.

10 a.m. Preliminary Address, The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, K.C. "Existing and Possible Bases of Consultation on Imperial Policy, with special reference to the Political Rights of Women."

11.15 a.m. "Political Equality." Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Miss Johnstone Scott (South Africa), Miss Kennedy (Newfoundland), Mrs. Sen and Atija Begum Rahamin (India), and speakers from other parts of the Empire.

2.15 p.m. "Equal Moral Standard." Miss Alison Neilans, Mrs. Lotika Basu (India), Miss England (New Zealand). Chair: Lord Astor.

July 10th.

10 a.m. "Some Legislative Inequalities." Miss Chrystal Macmillan. "Nationality of Married Women." Honourable N. M. Samarth. And a speaker on Hindu and Muslim Marriage Laws. Speaker on Canadian Marriage Laws. Chair: Mrs. Britomarte James (Victoria).

2.15 p.m. "Economic Equality." Mrs. Oliver Strachey, Miss M. Chave Collisson (Sydney). "The Position of Women under the Indian Factory System." Hon. N. M. Joshi (Indian Legislative Assembly). Chair: Lady Rhondda. The discussion will be opened by Lady Chatterjee.

1 p.m.

LUNCHEON, at the Criterion Restaurant, 222, Piccadilly, W.1. Speakers: The Rt. Hon. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., Lady Astor and Lady Chatterjee.

Tickets, Conference 3/6; Sessional 1/-; Luncheon 5/6.

Tickets from Miss Collisson, 17, Buckingham Street, Adelphi.

SWANSEA HOUSING MEETING.

At the Annual Meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee on Housing, held at Swansea Town Hall on June 16th, the Women's Freedom League was represented by Mrs. Dawson, Mrs. Thomas, and Miss Kirkland. Miss C. Neal, a member of the National Union of Women Teachers as well as of the Women's Freedom League, was present by special request to introduce a discussion on the advisability of establishing in Swansea a Consultative Council of Women representing the various women's organisations in the town. Miss Neal pointed out that nearly all the women's organisations, although they were formed for specific purposes, had certain points of interest in common, and were all keenly interested in certain measures of social reform. The securing of these measures would be much more speedy if the Organisations took similar agreed action simultaneously than if the Societies worked independently and at their own time. A consultative council would act as the connecting link between the various Societies, and would make the necessary arrangements for simultaneous action. This referred to national as well as to local matters, though it was probable that such a council in a town like Swansea would deal chiefly with local affairs. The proposal was taken up enthusiastically, and a full and free discussion followed. The motion that a consultative council be formed was passed unanimously, and an Executive Committee to draw up a Constitution and Rules was elected.

THE SIX POINT GROUP.

We have received the Annual Report, 1924-25, of the Six Point Group. Excellent fortnightly "At Homes" have been held throughout the year in addition to 32 Drawing-room Meetings, as well as a series of social functions. The Committee on Child Assault issued an admirable Report which was sent to the Home Office, and the political activities of this Group in other directions have been numerous. The Six Point Group has also issued a pamphlet by Bernard Shaw, on "The Unprotected Child and the Law," copies of which can be obtained from this Office, 3d. net.

OUR LENDING LIBRARY.

"Women in the Factory." By Dame Adelaide M. Anderson, D.B.E., M.A.

"What I Remember." By Millicent Garrett Fawcett, J.P., LL.D.

"Ancilla's Share." An Indictment of Sex Antagonism. Anonymous.

"The Police Court and Its Work." By Henry Turner Waddy.

May be borrowed from the Literature Department at 6d. per week.

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VEGETARIAN SUMMER (1925) HOLIDAY CENTRE.—Weston-super-Mare. Large Modern Mansion. Charming grounds. Lovely views. Tennis. Croquet. Accommodation 70.—Illustrated Prospectus from MR. F. de V. SUMMERS, 32, Sackville Street, London, W.1.

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guild-house, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, July 5th. 6.30. Rev. H. S. McClelland, B.A., B.D., of Trinity Church, Glasgow.

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