

THE VOTE,
AUGUST 20, 1920.
ONE PENNY.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

M. CURREY, O.B.E.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

VOL. XX. No. 565.

(Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper and transmissible through the post in the United Kingdom at the newspaper rate of postage, but to Canada and Newfoundland at the Magazine rate).

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 1920

OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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AN IDEAL FACTORY.

Interview with the Misses Clark and Weaver.

Camomile Street, London, is very proud of its Firm of Women Wholesale Manufacturers, a firm managed, directed and staffed entirely by women, and conducted on absolutely impartial and most enterprising lines. Its history, as recently told to a representative of *THE VOTE* by its two capable heads, the Misses Clark and Weaver, is a fascinating narrative of intelligence and fairplay.

"I worked for years for men as a designer of ladies' wearing apparel," said Miss Clark, "but always had it in my heart to start 'on my own' directly I had the opportunity. It always seemed to me so much more natural that women rather than men should conduct businesses directly connected with women's clothes. So eventually I entered partnership with Miss Weaver, who is a secretary and book-keeper, and we opened works for the manufacture of women's under-clothing. Our capital was a sum comprised of

Two Figures Only,

truly absurd to start a business involving the setting up of machinery, the paying of work girls, travellers' salaries, and all the expenses attendant on such an enterprise. But we were determined to succeed, and what we lacked in capital we made up for in work and hopefulness."

"Certainly it was uphill work," broke in Miss Weaver. "We were hampered not only by lack of money, but by that lack of confidence which is born of generations of trading experience, and which is such an asset to men in similar positions. These handicaps sometimes made us over-cautious, so that golden opportunities were occasionally lost. But belief in our own ability, and a thorough knowledge of our business helped us to win through during those first hard years. The advent of women into the field of commerce is as exciting as any work of fiction, since in many ways it is, of course, an exploration into hitherto untrodden

paths. For instance, we had to solve the problem of travellers, supplying large firms with big orders, auditing of books, and various other matters that a hundred years ago would have seemed as impossible for women as flying. Sometimes we raced ahead, then met with unexpected difficulties and real slippery paths, but nevertheless we were always advancing, and to-day our business has become so flourishing that motors have been installed to drive the machines.

"We do not believe," explained Miss Clarke, "in conducting and regulating our staff as those employers do who look upon workers as 'hands' over which it is necessary to exert strict supervision in order to get a maximum amount of work, and who, in short, must be treated like the machines they use in order to obtain greater gains for the owners of the factory. The hours of work here are from 8.45 to 5 o'clock, and the

Non-Necessity of Surveillance

illustrates the complete confidence between the workers and ourselves. Of course, disputes arise at times, but these are soon settled. Only recently Miss Weaver was actually congratulated by one of her own work girls on her spirit of justice, which is comforting to those of us who are tired of hearing that women cannot work together in harmony. According to regulations of the Wages Board the girls must be paid at least 6s. per day, but as they are engaged on piece-work it is no uncommon thing for their weekly wages to exceed £3, and no one is more pleased at this than we are."

"This is an anti-profiteering firm," continued Miss Clark. "The margin of profit may not be so large in consequence, but both Miss Weaver and myself are resolved that we at any rate will not take advantage of the present disturbed state of the world to get rich quickly. Articles are sold at the prices at which the materials were bought, and not at the reigning cost

which may probably have become inflated. Women must bring ideals into commerce as into their other fields of livelihood, and commerce must be freed of those sharp practices and unscrupulous dealings that are sometimes mistaken for good business ability and smart enterprise, and which are generally countenanced so long as they are successful.

"We are very anxious to see more women in the wholesale trade. At present they are very few, but we hope the time has now come when women possessed of initiative and grit will not be content to work for others, probably at a salary far below their deserts, or to spend their strength and energy in a firm where their work will never receive its just recognition, where their position must always be a subordinate one, and where a pension is not awarded even after years of faithful service. The desire to be on one's own, to build up a business and to see it grow, has been the ambition and life's work of many men, and it is encouraging to find that women, who up to the present have only ventured into the retail side of trades, are now beginning to realise the fascination and hear the call of a more ambitious environment."

"Both Miss Weaver and myself," Miss Clarke concluded, "are keen supporters of women's suffrage, although we took no active part in the agitation a few years ago. We had to content ourselves with being pioneers in another way, in opening up a hitherto unexplored road to women in the great realm of commerce."

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

We have often had occasion to complain of the dilatoriness of the members of the present House of Commons in the discharge of their parliamentary duties. How many times was it impossible to secure a quorum for the committee stage meetings of the Plumage Bill and the Bill which was to give women the vote on the same terms as men? It is interesting, therefore, to draw the attention of our readers to the following extract from last Sunday's *Observer*:-

"This is not a good House of Commons for attending to business—that is, the business of the House. Of the 700 members there are rarely more than 200 present. Even in the momentous Peace Bill Treaty division only 167 members voted. Scores of members left town early last week. Some returned for the luncheon to Mr. Lloyd George on Thursday, which was attended by nearly 100 Coalition Liberals, but most of them resumed their holidays as soon as it was over. They are not shooting grouse, for this is not a shooting house. They are taking it easy at the seaside. The truth of the matter is that a large proportion of the present House consists of middle-aged business men who have outlived any political ambitions they may have entertained. They stood at the Khaki Election because they regarded it as a national duty to do so. They will be unaffectedly glad when a dissolution absolves them from their embarrassing obligations. Even the Labour Party, composed for the most part of trade union officials who earn the best part of their living elsewhere, thinks it lucky when it can whip up an attendance of thirty out of more than twice that number of members."

What a difference a hundred keen women Members of Parliament would make to this dreary condition of affairs!

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WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Lyons' Girls' Strike.

A strike is in progress amongst some of the waitresses in the well-known tea shops of Messrs. Lyons. Out of the 5,000 employed, some 600 girls have come out. The trouble is in connection with the dismissal of the head kitchen woman at the Brompton Road branch, who was asked to leave, after 16 years' service, for wearing her trade union badge when on duty, which is forbidden by the management, although the union has been recognised by them since last May. It is stated that representatives of the Ministry of Labour have interviewed both sides with a view to opening negotiations for a settlement.

A Gallant Woman.

The King has conferred the Albert Medal for heroism on Mrs. Emmitt, wife of the stationmaster at Peshawar, in recognition of her gallant conduct on the occasion of a murderous attack by an Indian fanatic upon her husband and son last December.

The Goal in Sight!

At last the thirty-sixth State has been found to ratify the Women's Suffrage Amendment to the Federal Constitution in America. Tennessee has done so by 25 votes to 4. Provided the Lower House also ratifies the Amendment, which it is expected to do this week, the necessary authorisation for the amendment of the Federal Constitution will have been obtained.

A Lucrative Tour.

Miss J. L. Crossley Batt, who has an O.B.E., and is a doctor of science, will shortly start on a lecture tour to America, New Zealand, China, and Japan. It is not the first journey of the kind she has made, for on a previous occasion she set out on a world lecture tour with £60 in her pocket, and came back with much more.

More Women Doctors.

Medicine becomes more and more of a favoured profession for women, and no less than six scholarships are yearly awarded at the London School of Medicine for Women. This year these have been awarded from October to Miss E. Masterman, Miss E. Adams Clarke, Miss F. I. Moore, Miss M. Bowstead, and Miss E. H. R. Newbould.

Woman Press Representative.

Miss Mary Frances Billington, of the *Daily Telegraph*, is the only woman representative at the Imperial Press Conference in Canada. Miss Billington has a war record for arranging for the women writers who visited the munition factories where women were employed, and also the bases in France wherever women worked. She has visited India twice for press purposes, but this is her first visit to Canada.

First Daily Newspaper.

One of the first daily newspapers in the world is said to have been established by a woman, Miss Elizabeth Mallette, in London, March, 1702. She published and edited the *Daily Courant*, which she founded for the purpose of doing greater justice for women.

Suffrage in Greece.

An important Woman's Congress will be held at Athens in October, at which full political and economic rights will be demanded for the women of Greece. A general invitation has been extended to the other countries of Europe to attend the Conference and discuss social and economic problems.

A Congenial Profession.

Lady members of the Uxbridge Guardians now carry out the duties of tea tasters at the institutions. Previously the work was done by a professional tea taster, who was paid a guinea.

Women and the O.M.

The King is about to make certain additions to the Order of Merit very shortly, and the name of at least one woman is likely to be included.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Nurses—Conditions of Work.

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR asked the Minister of Health whether his attention had been called to the conditions under which nursing probationers in many London hospitals at present worked, especially with regard to housing accommodation and hours and conditions of duty; and whether he would consider recommending reforms in these connections to all hospitals in receipt of State grants for the benefit both of probationers and of the nursing profession generally? DR. ADDISON replied that he was fully aware of the unsatisfactory conditions under which many probationer nurses were at present employed, and any steps which the General Nursing Council might propose to remedy that state of affairs would have his sympathetic attention. State grants, however, were only paid in respect of the treatment of certain specified diseases, and he did not think it would be practicable to attach to them conditions such as the hon. member suggested. *Why not? Surely the health of the nurses is a great factor in the proper treatment of disease!*

Prisoners (Remand Cases).

MR. C. WHITE asked the Home Secretary whether he would consider the desirability of the establishment of separate places for the confinement of remand prisoners? MR. SHORTT replied that he could not make himself responsible for the very large expenditure necessary to establish and maintain special buildings for the detention of prisoners on remand and to provide them with the necessary staff. He also pointed out that magistrates were empowered to commit prisoners on remand to other places of security than prison. *Then why not make this compulsory in such cases as those of Ellen Sullivan and others mentioned more recently in THE VOTE?*

Women's Prisons.

MR. C. WHITE asked the Home Secretary whether his attention had been called to the evidence contained in the recently-published report of the Penal Reform League, showing that the influence of women's prisons on the character of young girls is of the worst possible kind; and whether the Government proposed to introduce any ameliorative legislation? MR. SHORTT replied that statements were frequently made to that effect; but he believed them to be quite unfounded. To a further question he admitted that he had read the evidence and a great deal more besides. *No one who cares for prison reform can deny that Mr. Shortt is entirely unsatisfactory as Home Secretary. His narrow official mind precludes all hope of any reform of our prison system during his term of office.*

Prison Administration.

MR. HANCOCK asked the Home Secretary if he would consider the desirability of the transfer of the Prison Medical Service to the Ministry of Health, and of prison education to the Board of Education? MR. SHORTT replied that the arrangements for maintaining the health of prisoners and providing means of education were intimately bound up with general questions of prison administration, and it was most undesirable that the responsibility for this should be divided among three separate Departments of Government. *We think there is nothing quite so undesirable as leaving prison administration in the hands of the present Home Office.*

Effect of Prison Life on Youths.

MR. GLANVILLE asked the Home Secretary if his attention had been called to the body of evidence in the recently-published report of the Penal Reform League to show that under our prison system youths who entered in a condition which gave hope of their reformation, were converted by contact with their fellow-prisoners and the system under which they lived into the most hardened criminals; and whether the Government proposed to introduce legislation to remedy this

state of affairs? MR. SHORTT replied that his attention had been drawn to the report. The records showed that the charges against the present system were greatly exaggerated. *Mr. Shortt's statement does not disprove the evidence.*

Assaults on Children.

LADY ASTOR asked the Home Secretary if he was aware of the increase in the number of cases of criminal or indecent assaults upon children; and whether, in view of the seriousness of the offence, he would consider the advisability of taking steps so that sentences which could be imposed under summary jurisdiction should be increased, or that all such cases should be tried before a superior court? MR. SHORTT replied that no evidence of any general increase in the number of assaults on children had been brought to his notice. If the hon. member would let him have any evidence on this point he would consider the matter further. *Would not the records serve the same purpose?*

Women and Girls (Employment).

DR. MACNAMARA, in reply to a question by MR. HOWARD GRITEN, said there were at present about 48,000 women and 12,000 girls on the live registers of the Employment Exchanges. Of the total 60,000, approximately 22,000, being insured under the Insurance Act, were in receipt of unemployment benefit. About 700 ex-members of the Women's Corps were in receipt of out-of-work donation. The possibility of absorbing women in domestic occupations was being given special consideration, and over 20,000 women and girls were at present being placed each month by the Employment Exchanges in domestic occupations. A considerable portion of the women who were registered at the Employment Exchanges for domestic work were, on account of their circumstances, only available for part-time and local employment, while others had no previous experience in anything but industrial war work.

Poor Law Reform.

MR. GILBERT asked the Minister of Health whether the Government proposed to bring in any legislation during the present Parliament dealing with the reform of the Poor Law and in any way altering the composition of the bodies which now administered the existing laws? DR. ADDISON replied in the affirmative.

Adjournment of Parliament.

The House of Commons adjourned last Monday until Tuesday, October 19th.

WOMEN FACTORY INSPECTORS.

It is good news that an important scheme of re-organisation has been sanctioned for the Factory Department by the Home Office, and that in future the men's and women's sides of the inspectorate will be amalgamated into a single organisation. The post of principal lady inspector will be abolished, and a woman deputy chief inspector will be appointed, with special duties in regard to the women inspectors. Women divisional and district inspectors will also be appointed, sharing with men responsibilities and duties. The changes involve considerable redistribution of the staff as between the various grades. The number of women inspectors will be considerably increased, but the total number of the staff will remain about the same. At the same time the scales of salaries of the inspectorate have been revised in view of the increase in the remuneration which technical qualifications and experience command in industry.

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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.

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RAILWAY MUDDLING.

The Women's Freedom League recommended the doing away with First Class Carriages as a possible economy in connection with the railways, and it is interesting to note that in reply to a question in the House of Commons, Mr. Neal, on behalf of the Minister of Transport, stated that the first-class seating accommodation on December 31st, 1919, represented 12.45 per cent. of the total, while the revenue from first-class passengers amounted to 14.68 per cent. of the total receipts from all passengers carried in the year ended December 31st, 1919. Mr. Neal failed to give any satisfactory answer to the enquiry as to the amount of rolling stock that is run for first-class passengers and the proportion of revenue derived from it. Last week a passenger was summoned by a railway company for travelling in a first-class carriage when in possession of only a third-class ticket, the defence being that there was no room in any third-class carriage. We are glad to record that the magistrate refused to give judgment in favour of the railway company. We have no good feeling towards railway companies who have such tender consciences in regard to the comfort of first-class passengers while they accept fares from third-class passengers and then let them travel twenty-three in a railway carriage intended only for ten people! The more we see and hear about our railway services the more we are convinced of their gross mismanagement. Now that the price of season tickets is to be raised so considerably, hundreds of thousands of people from the suburbs, among them a large proportion of women and girls, will be forced to leave their local stations soon after 7 o'clock in the morning in order to catch the last workmen's trains to London and other places. They will reach London just before or just after 8 o'clock, and as many of their offices and businesses do not open until 9.30 or 10 a.m., they must waste their time on the platforms during the coming winter months for between one and two hours each day. This will not do either the girls or their employers any good; but it will all help to bolster up our expensive Minister of Transport in his rake's progress in ineptitude. The least we can demand is that these workmen's trains shall be run until 9 o'clock in the morning. Each day they become more crowded, and they are a grave danger to the health of those who are obliged to travel in them. Only a very small percentage of our working population are fortunate enough to sleep within walking distance of their work. Cheap non-stop excursion trains are an ostensible piece of window-dressing on the part of the Ministry of Transport, but they entirely fail to meet the needs of the great mass of our population for whom cheap railway facilities are an essential in our present stage of civilisation. The recent increase of freights will naturally mean higher prices for all commodities, and the public will be caught up more and more in the meshes of our newly-formed Ministry of Transport.

VALUE OF WOMEN POLICE.

The report of the Committee on the Employment of Women on Police Duties has just been published. It states that the experience of the War has proved that women can be employed with advantage to the community in the performance of certain police duties which, before the War, were exclusively discharged by men. The Committee insist that it is essential that the women should be specially qualified, highly trained, and well paid, and that they should form an integral part of the police force. The Committee are convinced that the police duties which women undertook in munition works and thickly-populated areas during the period of the war must, in normal times, be entrusted solely to women under the direct orders of the police authorities, and that in industrial areas, where offences against the law relating to women and children are not infrequent, there is not only scope, but urgent need for the employment of policewomen. The Committee recommend that the age of entry be 25 to 30 years, and state that, while it is desirable that a certain proportion of policewomen should be of good education, women whose education is of elementary standard should not be excluded. Married women are not to be precluded from joining the Metropolitan Police women patrols, provided that they have no young children dependent on them for whose care they are not able to make satisfactory arrangements. Women constables are to receive 60s. a week on appointment on probation; sergeants, 90s. weekly; inspectors, £260 a year; superintendents, £320 to £350 a year, rising in four years to £380 or £410.

A COMMENDABLE "STUNT."

The daily papers have been recently deriving an immense amount of amusement out of "The Sewing Parson," an enterprising clergyman in the South-East of London, who, rather than let his parish sewing class go to pieces during the holidays, is gallantly "carrying on" while the instructresses are on holiday, with his wife's assistance! We have always failed to grasp why a man who understands and applies the elements of needlework should be treated from time immemorial as a humorous byword, qualified to rank with other hoary specimens of the jovial inebriate, or mother-in-law type of joke. Sailors are proverbially "handy men," not only with their needles, but in many another domestic direction as well, a habit of mind which frequently engenders envy in the bosoms of wives whose husbands are inconveniently burdened with certain traditional theories as to "woman's work"!

After all is said and done, can anyone advance a really pertinent reason *why* women's fingers—already overburdened with a host of minor domestic duties, and these often in addition to professional occupations which take their owners outside the home for a number of hours daily—should alone bear the brunt of the darning and patching and mending which falls to the lot of most households in the land? Men are not ashamed to cook and clean and design wearing apparel for both sexes; why then should it be esteemed such a ludicrous event if they sympathetically lightened the family work-basket of an evening, with or without the assistance of their womenfolk! Why should knitting and darning and the more constructive amongst the needlework stitches not replace some of the more aimless "hand-work" of the kindergarten, and form a definite portion of the earlier school curriculum of both sexes alike? We confidently predict that such an innovation would go far to counteract the idle loafing contracted by so many boys as they grow towards manhood, besides fulfilling an important function in the preparation of the future "ideal mate"! We very much hope that when the "Sewing Parson" is released from his present duty he will turn his inventive genius towards the organisation of a parish sewing class for husbands. We know that such a project would win approval from many hard-working wives!

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Women's Power and Responsibility.

Do the men and women of this country realise the power which has been placed in their hands? For many years there has been at fitful intervals a demand for "the democratic control of foreign politics," and now the citizens of this country and Empire are called upon to take their share in controlling not merely the foreign politics of this country or this Empire, but the destinies of the world. When the Peace Treaty with Germany was ratified in Paris on January 10th, 1920, there came into existence the League of Nations, the Covenant of which has constituted the first 26 clauses of each of the Peace Treaties with the former enemy Powers. By that Covenant the machinery was set up by which the nations of the world can, if they so desire, avoid war in the future, and in that power lies the responsibility. The Government of a democratic country represents the wishes and the opinions of its citizens; what part do we intend that our representatives shall play in the Council of the League of Nations? To answer that question it is essential that there should be in this country

A Clear Understanding

of the principles on which the League is based, and of the sacrifices and benefits in which each member State must take its part.

Thirty-nine nations have now signed the Covenant, the only notable "absentees" being, for very different reasons, first, and most unfortunately, the United States of America, Russia, and the late enemy powers. With these exceptions the countries of the world have bound themselves not to go to war without first submitting their quarrel to one of the bodies, the Council, the Assembly or the International Court of Justice of the League, whose decision must be given within six months or "a reasonable time." If that decision is unanimous it is binding on both the nations concerned. If the body consulted should be unable to give a unanimous decision the nations may then go to war after a further delay of three months. Consequently no nation which abides by the Covenant can plunge the world into war in a sudden fit of anger or a sudden madness of ambition; public opinion, not only in the countries concerned but in the whole world, can be brought to bear on the dispute, and hot blood will have time to cool.

The Power of Public Opinion

is the first and the great "guarantee" which the League of Nations gives to its members of security in the future. Of course, it is impossible to legislate against the existence of a "traitor State" which may declare war without appealing to the League, or refuse to accept a judgment which is adverse to its claims. In such eventualities the Council of the League has the power to declare a blockade—economic, financial, commercial—a terrible and a potent weapon in these days, or in the last resort the Council can call upon the other member States to supply the necessary armed forces to protect the innocent and punish the guilty.

In this feeling of security against sudden attack, in the certainty of rapid and certain support, lies the hope and the possibility of a limitation of armaments. No nation under the system of rival alliances and the delicate equipoise of the balance of power could be expected to lay themselves open to attack by a strongly-armed neighbour; but as one of the objects of the League it is laid down in the Covenant that a Com-

mission shall be appointed to advise the Council "in the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of interational obligations." In the cases of the late Allied and Associated Powers and the 13 States who were neutral during the Great War the Powers will have the right to accept or reject the recommendations of the Council as they see fit, but with regard to the admission of the late enemy Powers and certain other nations which have become fully self-governing since the war and who are now applying for membership, one of the conditions is, that they shall accept the scale of armaments laid down for them by the Council.

In the minds of all men and women to-day the great questions affecting peace and war overshadow all other considerations, but the problems of peace are almost as many and as difficult as those of war. One lesson which the war taught every nation was its dependence on others, that in the complicated questions of finance, commerce and a hundred other matters we were members of not separate families but of one family, that the conditions of life in one branch affected the whole, and that for national effort we had to substitute

International Co-operation.

The first fruits of this new international thought have been the establishment of the International Labour Bureau and the International Health Commission. So vital and pressing were the problems of labour that although owing to the delays in the ratification of the Peace Treaty, the League of Nations had not come into existence, the first International Conference of the Labour Bureau was held in Washington last November. Here a series of far-reaching conventions were passed, and the member States are now bound to introduce the necessary Bills into their legislative assemblies so that these conventions may, if approved by those bodies, become law.

The matters dealt with in Washington were of the highest importance, and in several instances specially affected women. The principle of the eight-hours day or 48-hours week for workers in every country was accepted, the employment of children in industry under the age of 14 was forbidden except in certain Eastern countries where the age is to be 12 years, a great advance in countries where a child could previously be employed as soon as it could walk. The conventions dealing with

Maternity Benefits

and forbidding the employment of women on night work, though carried in Washington, seem likely to have a stormy passage through our House of Commons.

The scheme for the establishment of the International Health Bureau was approved by the Council of the League at their meeting at San Sebastian on August 4th. There are no frontiers to disease, and there is no matter on which international action is more urgently needed than to prevent the spread of epidemics and to raise the standard of health and cleanliness all over the world.

All this vast machinery is being set up; it is ready to our hands, ready to do the work, if the driving force is supplied. The power of the League of Nations rests on the public opinion of the world; it is the responsibility of the men and women of this nation to create that public opinion.

M. CURREY, O.B.E.

FRIDAY,
AUG. 20,
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THE VOTE

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