

THE VOTE.  
JULY 24, 1925.

## WOMEN CIVIL SERVANTS AND EQUAL PAY

# THE VOTE

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

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ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 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 ENGINEERS AT WEMBLEY.

A most successful 3 days' Conference of Women in Science, Industry and Commerce was held at Wembley last week. Convened by the Women's Engineering Society, in co-operation with various industrial women's organisations, the Conference was the first of its kind in this country to promote the advancement of women in the higher branches of industry, whilst also supplying an opportunity to the Women's Engineering Society to hold its third International Congress in conjunction with the Wembley gathering. The Women's Engineering Society, which came into existence in 1919, as a result of interest in the various branches of Engineering fostered among women during the war, is not only breaking down very considerable sex barriers in many directions and winning public recognition from most of the male engineering institutions, but also co-operates with women engineers in other countries, and has already held two previous International Conferences, one at Birmingham in 1923, and the second, last year in Manchester. The remarkable success of these Conferences is almost entirely due to the organising skill, wide vision, and admirable "publicity" sense of Miss Caroline Haslett, Secretary of the Women's Engineering Society and Director of the Women's Electrical Association, whose portrait we reproduce on this page.

The Wembley Conference was formally opened by H.R.H. the Duchess of York, who bids fair to take as great an interest in industrial achievements as her Royal husband, and who was introduced to the large audience by Lady Astor, who presided. The Duchess admitted

in her opening speech that this was the first women's Conference at which she had ever presided.

Lady Rhondda affirmed that women were well adapted for commercial life because as a sex they tended to show more interest in persons than in things, and commerce was essentially a matter of human intercourse. One way of breaking down the present

sex barriers against the higher administrative branches of industry was for business men to be willing to take their daughters into their businesses as they now took their sons. Girls, concluded Lady Rhondda, who had any taste for commerce or business should urge their fathers to give them a share of the work. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., also impressed the necessity of getting as many new avenues as possible opened to women, and deplored the attitude of mind, which still largely prevailed, of confining women to the lowest paid and most uninteresting work. This was partly due to the fact that women were not yet properly organised in industry, especially in the engineering trades. To-day only in the textile trade, where men and women had worked together for over a century, were women really organised. So long as women were regarded by men as universal undercutters, so long would

their position in industry remain low. Women entering industry should make it a point of honour to get into touch with their trade union, or failing that into a women's organisation, and thereby help the girls and other women. It was absolutely necessary to have the men's unions on their side, and get them to co-operate.

Other speakers at the opening session included Miss



MISS C. HASLETT.

Secretary of the Women's Engineering Association.

Photo by

[F. A. Swaine

Bondfield, Miss Ethel Bailey, an American engineer, Miss Haslett of Bedford College, Miss Kerstin Hesselgren of Sweden, a factory inspector, and a woman M.P. of the Second Chamber or Senate, Mrs. Wintringham, Dame Millicent Fawcett, and Mrs. Philip Snowden.

A luncheon at the Garden Club, Wembley, kindly given by the British Electrical Development Association, and at which the Duke and Duchess of York were present, was again presided over by Lady Astor. A toast to "Women in Science, Industry and Commerce" was proposed by Miss Vera Holmes, the expert designer of Diesel engines, who reported that twenty years ago there were practically no women in important positions in either science, industry or commerce. To-day, women Directors of businesses ran into hundreds, Lady Rhondda being a notable instance as a Director of some 30 companies. Women were also being admitted to every branch of Engineering, and were taking degrees in all the sciences, not only in Great Britain, but in many other countries.

Miss Bondfield, in reply, urged that women should use their new power by bringing new influences into trade and commerce, and so put science to finer uses than those of destruction. Women, she said, must aim for nobler ideals in the common ways of life, and transmute the getting of the daily bread and the making of homes into something approaching a sacrament.

The morning session on the second day of the Conference was devoted to Engineering, Chemistry and Research, when papers were read by Miss H. M. Davis, who holds an important post with a firm that manufactures electrical mining plant, and goes down into the mines during the course of her official duties ("Electricity applied to Mining"); by Miss Isabel H. Hadfield, M.Sc., who works at the National Physical Laboratory in Chemical Research ("Some Chemical Problems in the Cotton Industry"); and by Miss Ethel Bailey, the first woman member of the American Association of Automotive Engineers, and a member of several important technical associations in the United States ("Automotive Research"). Miss Griff, who presided, and who is the manager of a Birmingham company which specialises in stainless steel, referred in her opening speech to the fact that 20 years ago she was the first woman in England to study engineering, and that in those days she was considered the most extraordinary oddity that ever walked the earth. To-day, women scientists and engineers were able to hold good posts, both practical and executive, whilst London had its Atalanta Engineering Works staffed and controlled by women. The present Conference was the materialisation of the speaker's dreams in 1904.

The afternoon session was devoted to Industrial Welfare and Factory inspection, and was presided over by Mrs. Willson, M.B.E. Papers were read by Miss Constance Smith, late Deputy Inspector of Factories, who has only recently resigned her position as such, having reached the age limit ("The Woman Factory Inspector in Industrial History"); by Miss C. U. Kerr, of the Industrial Welfare Society ("The Effect of Welfare Work on Health and Efficiency"); and by Miss E. E. Wilson, Chief of the Women's Staff in a large electrical firm in Sheffield ("The Possibilities of Advancement for Women in Industry").

Miss Constance Smith traced the evolution of the woman factory inspector in this country from 1893 down to the present day, and described their establishment to day in almost every industrial country in the world. Their influence, said Miss Smith, was most marked in Denmark, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, where Miss Kerstin Hesselgren acted as Chief Woman Inspector for the whole of Sweden, and Mme. Betzy Kjelsberg for the whole of Norway. In the Latin countries progress was slower, but in the newer industrial states, Austria, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, etc., there was a strong desire to model their factory legislation on that of Great Britain. India, the eighth largest industrial country in the world, had, however, only one woman inspector (Bombay).

The morning session on the third and last day was devoted to Commerce and Salesmanship, when papers were read by Miss Gladys Burlton, B.A., Principal of

the Burlton Business Institute, and well known in the business world as a lecturer on Salesmanship and Business Practice ("Salesmanship"); and by Miss L. F. Nettlefold, LL.B., who figured so prominently in public life, in 1913, as a co-plaintiff in the famous test case of *Bebb v. The Law Society*, which claimed that women were entitled to be admitted as solicitors ("The place of the Wholesaler in the Scheme of Distribution"). Miss Nettlefold spoke on this subject with authority, for, in addition to being a pioneer woman solicitor, she is also joint Managing Director with her brother in the famous firm of Nettlefold & Sons, a wholesale ironmongery business established a century ago.

Mrs. Hoster, who presided, described the progress women had achieved in commercial life, which she herself had entered as a woman pioneer 32 years ago. Well-known examples were quoted of women advertising managers, sales managers, managing directors, company secretaries, chartered accountants, heads of insurance societies, and stockbrokers. The Soroptimist Club, an association of business and professional women, numbered 130 members, each one representing a separate profession, or section of a profession. Mrs. Hoster concluded by urging London business women to become members of the London Chamber of Commerce, which had 60,000 men members, and only about seven women.

The final session of the Conference on Friday afternoon was devoted to the subject of "Electricity in Relation to Domestic Science," and was presided over by Alderman Mrs. Hammer, an expert on this subject. Papers were read by Miss M. Partridge, B.Sc., electrical engineer, who has undertaken important contracts for the lighting of houses and churches, and who also lectures to women all over the country on the domestic uses of electricity ("Producing and Distributing Electricity"); and by Miss T. J. Dillon, B.Sc., Lecturer on Physics at King's College for Women, Domestic Science Department ("At Home with Electricity").

#### THE CLYDE CAMPAIGN, 1925.

*Hon. Organiser:* Miss ALIX CLARK.

*Speaker:* Miss LILIAN LENTON.

Saturday, July 18th, witnessed the opening meeting of the Campaign which we are conducting for the eighteenth time on the banks of the Clyde. As usual at this favourite holiday resort of Scotland, a large crowd gathered on the pier-head and listened to what we had to say for an hour or so. On the whole they were friendly, having but little to remark or ask in criticism of our propaganda. There was the customary obstructive drunken man, and those other chivalrous ones who took our part against him, so that a free fight in the midst of our crowd seemed imminent. However, it didn't matter—the commotion increased our audience.

Miss Clark sold many VOTES, and was most successful with her little collection to pay the cost of the wagonette.

The weather, on which the success of this campaign so greatly depends, is all we could desire. The delicate blues of the sky are broken only by the softest of dainty clouds which but add to the beauty of the scenery, holding no threat of rain. If, throughout the rest of our stay here, the Fates are as kind to us as on this our first day, we shall have no cause for complaint.

During this coming month, nightly meetings will be held on the pier-head at Rothesay, at 8 p.m., and during the day we shall visit Largs, Dunoon, Millport, and Helensburgh, selling our literature and conducting daytime meetings in these towns.

Needless to say, we shall be very thankful for any help, financial or personal, that any of our members and friends can give us.

#### INSURANCE SERVICE FOR WOMEN.

EXPERT ADVICE GIVEN ON ALL CLASSES OF INSURANCE AND PENSIONS. NO FEES PAYABLE.

MISS KEY JONES, Organiser.

HALL & GLOVER, Incorporated Insurance Consultants, BARDON CHAMBERS, LEEDS.

## IN PARLIAMENT.

#### Certificated Teachers (Unemployment).

COL. DAY (Lab., Central Southwark) asked the President of the Board of Education if he could state the number of students who left the training colleges in the year 1924 fully qualified as teachers, and the number of the same who, on the last known date, had failed to obtain posts? LORD EUSTACE PERCY replied that the latest information at his disposal was based on returns received from the training colleges last December. Those returns showed that out of 7,184 students who left the colleges in July, 1924, and about whom the authorities of the colleges possessed information, 5,835 (81.2 per cent) had then obtained teaching posts, 177 (2.6 per cent) had not attempted to obtain posts, and 916 (13.2 per cent.) had failed to obtain posts.

#### Unemployed Juveniles (Committee of Inquiry).

MR. WESTWOOD (Lab., Peebles) asked the Secretary for Scotland if he proposed to set up a Committee for the purpose of inquiring into the education of employed juveniles; if so, when the Committee would be set up; and what would be the terms of reference or scope of the inquiry? SIR JOHN GILMOUR replied that he proposed, in consultation with his right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour, to appoint a Committee for Scotland with the same terms of reference as assigned to the Committee for England and Wales, namely: "To inquire into and advise upon the public system of education in Scotland 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." He was not yet in a position to announce the names of the members of the Committee.

*(The Women's Freedom League has written to the Secretary of Scotland asking that suitable and experienced women be included on this Committee.)*

MR. WESTWOOD inquired when the Committee would be set up? SIR JOHN GILMOUR said that he hoped to do it shortly.

#### Marriage Allowances.

MAJOR HORE-BELISHA (Lib., Devonport), asked the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that children's allowances were stopped, in addition to marriage allowances, when a naval rating or a soldier refused to live with his wife, through no fault on the wife's part, and were payable to a guardian other than the wife, whereas it was obviously not the intention of the regulation so to penalise the mother, who was better qualified to look after her children than any guardian, he would take steps to confer with the other service departments concerned, with a view to modifying that regulation?

MR. DAVIDSON (Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty) replied that the matter was not quite so simple as the hon. and gallant Member's question would suggest. Payment of marriage allowance in respect of such children would involve an allotment by the naval rating which he might not be willing to make. The question was discussed in September, 1923, by the Inter-Departmental Committee on marriage allowances, but he would look further into the hon. Member's suggestion, and let him know the result. SIR LAMING WORTHINGTON-EVANS (Secretary of State for War) added that his department would review the regulation in consultation with the Admiralty and the Air Ministry.

#### Solicitation.

SIR HERBERT CAYZER (U., Portsmouth S.), asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he would consider the question of the appointment of a departmental committee to inquire into the laws with regard to solicitation and their administration, in view of the demand for such an investigation?

MR. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON (Under Secretary, Home Office) replied that the Home Secretary was considering the matter, but had not yet had time to arrive at a carefully-thought-out line of procedure.

#### Civil Service (Women's Pay).

MAJOR CLIFTON BROWN (U., Hexham) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in what manner the review on women's pay in the Civil Services was carried out; whether a definite Committee was formed; whether there was an Agenda; and if there were any written minutes, evidence, or findings which could be published? MR. GUINNESS replied that the question of remuneration of women in the Civil Service as compared with men was fully reviewed by the present Government, and their decision was announced in the reply which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave to the hon. and gallant Member on the 5th March last. No Committee had been considered necessary. MAJOR BROWN inquired if it was quite an informal review, since no Committee was considered necessary? MR. GUINNESS replied that there was no statement as to whether it would be formal or informal. The matter had been fully reviewed by the Government, and, for the same financial reasons that obtained when the House decided against it, it had been found necessary to decide against it again.

#### Health Visitor (Dorset County Council).

MR. G. HURST (U., Moss Side) asked the Minister of Health if he was aware that the Dorset County Council was advertising for a health visitor at a salary of £148 a year, out of which the person appointed had to contribute £7 15s. a year towards the superannuation fund and to find her own bicycle; and whether, seeing that this salary, with its yearly increments, was far below the normal scale, he would draw that Council's attention to the effect of its action upon the standard of trained nurses likely to be attracted into the public health service? MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN replied that he was in communication with the County Council on the subject.

#### Food Poisoning (Lambeth).

COL. DAY asked the Minister of Health if he was aware that recently in the Borough of Lambeth it was found that a local meat retailer boiled pork and beef in a portable copper situated in a yard full of flies and other insects attracted by neighbouring dustbins, and that the medical officer of health had traced 24 cases of food poisoning to that tainted source, and would he consider introducing legislation to give local authorities increased powers in order to deal with such practices, which were dangerous to public health? SIR KINGSLEY WOOD (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health) replied that his right hon. Friend had received a copy of the report of the medical officer of health on the case referred to. He was considering what steps might be practicable and desirable, with a view to regulating the conditions under which food was prepared.

#### Custard and Egg Powders.

MR. W. BAKER (Lab., Bristol, E.) asked the Minister of Health if he had received a copy of the Report on custard and egg powders which had been presented to the Monmouthshire County Council by the President of the National Analysts' Association; and whether, in view of the fact that those powders were in the main dyed starch and that six eggs to the ton were sufficient to comply with the law, he proposed to take any action? SIR KINGSLEY WOOD replied that his right hon. Friend had received a copy of the Report. He had no power to lay down any rules as to the composition of custard and egg powders so long as they were not injurious to health.

#### Bastardy Bill.

In reply to CAPT. BOWYER (U., Buckingham), the PRIME MINISTER said he had received twenty resolutions from local authorities in favour of the Bastardy Bill, but that the Government did not propose to grant special facilities for its passage.

F. A. U.

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

### WOMEN CIVIL SERVANTS & EQUAL PAY.

In the July number of *Opportunity*, the organ of the Federation of Women Civil Servants, an Equal Pay Parliamentary Campaign is announced. This time the Federation of Women Civil Servants is not acting alone. The Civil Service Equal Pay Committee, which is representative of every organisation within the Service which has women members, has already addressed a letter to every Member of Parliament, and numerous letters from individual civil servants have been received by M.P.s, not only those with London seats, but also those representing provincial constituencies. Each member of the Federation is asked to inquire if her M.P. is a supporter of Equal Pay; and, if there is any doubt about the matter, to open up correspondence, and, where possible, see that Member when he visits his constituency. *Opportunity* says quite truly that in the famous debates in the House of Commons, in May, 1920, and in August, 1921, on Equal Pay in the Civil Service, the principle was accepted as a just one, but the plea was that the financial stress upon the country at that time made it impossible to concede the demand immediately. It was resolved by Parliament, however, that the matter should be reconsidered "within three years." It is also claimed that the initial cost of putting into force equal pay in the Service has been greatly exaggerated in various statements in the House of Commons; but, whether it is a high annual figure or a low one, the fact remains that this sum represents an extra specialised form of taxation on women civil servants who have contributed to the country's depleted exchequer, month by month, out of their wages that sum by which their rates fall short of the just rates for the work, *i.e.*, the men's rates. Further, three years have passed. August 1924 has come and gone; the financial stress upon the country has lightened; income-tax and super-tax have been lowered; but the women Civil Servants' tax has not been removed. Neither Parliament nor an independent Committee has reconsidered the financial position, and decided whether justice might now be done to women. The promise of 1921 has not been fulfilled. The line that is now being taken by the women civil servants is as follows: They are insisting that the principle of equal pay has already been accepted by the House in the Resolutions passed on May 19th, 1920, and August 5th, 1921, and they therefore do not want a Committee of Inquiry into the merits of the case. Since the application of the agreed principle has been delayed on the question of cost, the women want a Committee of Inquiry into the application of the principle of equal pay, having regard to the cost of the various methods. They point out that the House has been misled on the question of the cost, which might be a very large or a very small sum, according to the system adopted. In August, 1921, a review of the Equal Pay question was promised within three years. It is now July, 1925, and women are looking for the fulfilment of this promise, which is overdue.

The Women's Freedom League sends its heartiest good wishes to the Federation of Women Civil Servants in their efforts to create an important precedent for paying men and women equally for the same job, and in making a breach in the wall of prejudice.

### WOMEN AND THE BOARD OF CONTROL

The Board of Control, which deals with Lunacy and Mental Deficiency, consists of the Chairman, Sir F. J. Willis, K.B.E., C.B., two unpaid men Commissioners, one of whom is a medical man, and one unpaid woman Commissioner, as well as six paid men Commissioners, three of whom are medical men, and one paid woman Commissioner. According to their *Newsletter*, the Medical Women's Federation appointed a sub-Committee last November to prepare evidence regarding the need for a Medical Woman Commissioner on the Board of Control, and to take steps to submit such evidence to the Royal Commission on Lunacy, together with a list of suitable candidates. This Committee met under the Chairmanship of Dr. Dickinson Berry (now Lady Berry) four times, and the following is a synopsis of the evidence given:—

"The Medical Women's Federation submitted that at least one of the members of the Board of Control should be a fully qualified medical woman with previous experience in the care and treatment of mental disease. The advantages from the point of view of the Patient, the Public, and the Board of Control, were summarised and the fact emphasised that there is a greater number of females than males amongst mental cases, and that for this reason the opportunity of consulting a medical woman should be provided. It is not the question of providing medical women for all the women patients, but of having one available on the Board of Control to advise on those special cases which constantly occur amongst women of all ages under its jurisdiction.

"There is undoubtedly a demand by the relatives of the insane for a medical woman's advice, more particularly in cases of puberty and adolescence. Other departments of the Ministry of Health have accepted the principle that medical women are desirable, and it is felt that there is at least as great a necessity amongst patients suffering from all forms of mental diseases. The fact that there are already two women Commissioners does not affect the point at all. The desire is to have a woman as well qualified as her male colleagues, appointed to sit on the Board, in addition to any and all of its present members. Even if more than one medical woman were appointed, there would not be an undue representation of women on the Board."

The Women's Freedom League is in whole-hearted agreement with the foregoing statement. We would also press for the immediate appointment of a medical woman as Inspector. There are two medical men Inspectors but no woman Inspector. When an Inquiry is decided upon in regard to any Institution of women mental patients it ought to be possible for a woman Inspector to be sent, and, preferably of course, a medical woman. In an institution in which the patients and nurses are women, a capable woman Inspector is much more likely to get the best results from an investigation than a man.

### LEAGUE OF NATIONS (British Delegation.)

It is with great satisfaction that we note that the Duchess of Atholl will be included among the Government's delegates to the League of Nations Assembly at Geneva next September, the other delegates being the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Austen Chamberlain), Lord Cecil of Chelwood, Sir George Grahame, G.C.V.O. (His Majesty's Ambassador at Brussels), Mr. A. M. Samuel (Parliamentary Secretary, Overseas Trade Department), and Sir Cecil Hurst, K.C.B. Mrs. Coombe Tennant, Dame Edith Lyttelton, and Mrs. Swanwick have previously been sent as substitute delegates to the Assembly, but this year the Duchess of Atholl, as a member of the Government, can hardly be sent in any less capacity than a fully accredited Government delegate. We wish her every success in her work at Geneva.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

The Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women (to which the Women's Freedom League is affiliated) will be held in Birmingham, 19th to 24th September. The special subject to be considered at this Conference is "Practical Idealism," and at the public meetings arranged for Monday afternoon, September 21st, Tuesday evening, September 22nd, and Thursday evening, September 24th, there will be speakers on Family Endowment, Penal Reform, and Education from the International point of view.

The Committee of the Women's Freedom League appointed Miss Anna Munro to represent us, and sent forward a resolution for the Agenda, demanding the actual removal of sex disqualification in all branches of the political, social, and economic (professional and industrial) life of our country as the first step towards "practical idealism." Other resolutions which are of special interest to members of our League are: "That the National Council of Women protests against the continued practice in the Civil Service and under Local Authorities of restricting the right of married women to work, holding that women should decide for themselves whether or not they should carry on paid work after marriage. It demands that all regulations of national and local authorities debarring married women from employment should be withdrawn." (Proposed by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.) "That the National Council of Women call upon the Government to secure that more women officials shall be associated in the administration of legislation affecting women and children." (Proposed by the Federation of Women Civil Servants.) "This Council, believing that the laws and their administration should uphold the equal moral standard, calls upon the Government to give facilities for a Bill for the repeal of the laws specially directed against 'common prostitutes,' and to substitute

in their place an equal law, applicable to all persons who annoy or molest others in the streets and public places." (Proposed by St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.) "That this Council, having specially in mind the existing moral conditions in Singapore and Hong Kong, calls upon the Government to take the necessary steps to ensure the permanent closure within a definite time, not exceeding three years, of all known or recognised brothels within the British Crown Colonies." (Proposed by the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene.) "That the National Council of Women warmly supports the claim of peeresses in their own right to sit and vote in the House of Lords, and urges the Government to further legislation to remove the political disabilities of such peeresses at an early date. In the view of the Council the question is one that should be considered upon its merits, and not in connection with the problem of the Reform of the Second Chamber." (Proposed by the Executive Committee of the N.C.W.) "That the National Council of Women is of opinion that protective legislation should normally be based not upon sex but upon the nature of the occupation. At the same time, pending the legal regulation of hours of work for men, it is not prepared to advocate the abolition of the principle of protective legislation for women, as laid down in the Factory Act." (Proposed by the Industrial Committee.) Our own view is that the last sentence should be deleted. Those who are out for equal opportunities and equal remuneration for women and men in industry cannot afford to compromise in this matter. The last Resolution on the Agenda is:—"That this meeting respectfully urges the authorities of the Churches to do all in their power to secure that a vocation to the Ministry of Religion shall receive official recognition, whether its possessor be a man or a woman."

## CHILD ASSAULT.

Last February the Home Office inquired whether the Medical Women's Federation could offer any evidence or suggestions on the subject of Assaults on Young Persons. The Federation's *Newsletter* reports that a sub-Committee was appointed, written evidence submitted, and that two members appeared in person before the Home Office Committee.

The evidence offered was (1) from medical women in private practice; (2) from medical women holding some official appointment, or acting on behalf of some society such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; (3) from medical women who are also Justices of the Peace, and are in the habit of adjudicating on their local benches. Examples of some appalling cases reported by various members of the Medical Women's Federation were also submitted.

With regard to the question of the direction in which the law or its administration might be improved, the sub-Committee made the following suggestions:—

1. That the penalties are, in the majority of cases, inadequate and out of proportion to the seriousness of the crime, and this leads probably to a certain section of the public regarding the crime too lightly. It seemed to the sub-Committee that there were two classes of offenders: (a) Boys and younger men who, on account of overcrowding, drink, bad company, lack of moral education, and excess of sex appeal in the cinema, stage, or press, have lost all sense of decency and self-control; (b) Men who are mentally unstable, or morally and mentally deficient. In both cases, the sub-Committee felt strongly that (1) fines are inadequate and should be abolished; (2) the defendant should in every case be examined by a special central Board of Medical Experts, and that this Board should have the power of certifying as insane or of unsound mind those cases requiring asylum care, and of recommending for permanent detention in some suitable home, those borderland cases which, if allowed to go at large, would prove a danger to the public; (3) That in the case of (a) the present short

sentences of a few months of imprisonment should be extended to a term of years, of not less than two.

With regard to the hearing of the case in the Magistrates' Court, the suggestions were: (1) The case should be heard *in camera*. (2) That the child assaulted should in every case appear before the magistrates, for cases have been known in which there has been a miscarriage of justice due to the sympathy of the magistrates having been, in the absence of the victim, concentrated on the defendant and his relatives. (3) The child, if a girl, should be allowed to stand beside a policewoman, or some other woman official of the Court, for she often does not understand the question put, and the atmosphere of the Court is apt to be antagonistic and difficult. For instance, one of the members, a Justice of the Peace, reported the case of two small children who gave very clear and convincing evidence, but when confronted at the Assizes by the Judge's question: "Little girl, do you understand the nature of an oath?" and "Little girl, do you understand the difference between falsehood and truth?" were intimidated and unable to give satisfactory answers, and the prisoner was therefore acquitted owing to the absence of *sworn evidence*. (4) Medical examination of the child, if a boy, should be examined by a man doctor, and, if a girl, by a woman doctor, and that only one other person, preferably a nurse, should be present at the examination, and not a parent, relative, or friend. In cases of incest it is important that the mother should not be present. (5) Pending Judicial Procedure, the child should be carefully looked after by its parents, if the case is not one of incest, or in a "Home" other than a Rescue Home. If arrangements could be made for individual care, it would be well. With regard to the Press, it is suggested that in the reports of all police proceedings, the names of the children offended against should be suppressed. The following are recommended under the heading of Prevention: (1) Education of parents by

literature, and talks at Welfare Centres; (2) Parents should be advised of the danger of overcrowding, etc.; (3) More supervision in parks and public places and deserted spaces, particularly by *Policewomen* with power of arrest; (4) Better lighting in the streets and on sea fronts; (5) Further, that all persons convicted of exhibitionism should be subjected to medical examination by the Special Board and certified as of unsound mind. The present short sentences passed on these individuals are useless, for the men return to the same town or village and are a source of terror, fear, and harm to the same children.

#### WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

##### Recognition of Woman M.P.

At the conclusion of her recitation at His Majesty's Theatre recently, Mrs. Hilton Philipson, M.P., who, as Miss Mabel Russell, has been appearing in "The Punch Bowl," for three weeks, was made a life Governor of the Middlesex Hospital. Mrs. Philipson's salary (£50 a week) has been given to the fund which is being raised to rebuild the existing premises. The honour was conferred upon Mrs. Philipson on the stage, in front of a crowded audience.

##### Women at the Next Assembly.

In addition to the recent appointment of the Duchess of Atholl to the British Delegation, the *I.W.S.A. News* for July reports that there is good hope that Mlle. Milenia Atanatzkovich will be appointed as one of the delegates of the Jugo-Slavia Government to the next Assembly of the League of Nations. Mlle. Atanatzkovich is shortly sitting for her examinations at the School of Diplomatic Studies.

##### Bedford College's New Laboratory.

The new Sargent Laboratory of Plant Physiology at Bedford College for Women was opened recently by Lord Justice Sargent, whose sister, the late Miss Alice Sargent, bequeathed the money for its building. The laboratory, which is the only one of its kind in London, has a botanic garden attached to it, in which specimens for research will be grown. Miss Sargent was herself a student of botany, and had especially interested herself in the saving of old English names for old English flowers.

##### Working Woman on Food Council.

Among the members of the Food Council which is to be set up in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Food Prices will be Mrs. Wilson, the wife of a Kentish Town plumber, who gave evidence before the Commission. There will probably be another woman member of the Council, but Mrs. Wilson will represent the great mass of working women.

##### Women's Prison at West Virginia.

A prison for women, designed and run by women, with no walls, no warders, and no guards, is shortly to be established at Alderson, West Virginia (U.S.A.), and will be known as the Federal Industrial Institution for Women. The superintendent of the new "prison" will be Dr. Mary B. Harris, who, last January, was appointed field secretary of the International Association of Policewomen, and is well known in America as a prison reformer.

##### International Labour Women.

The Labour Party has appointed Dr. Marion Phillips, Mrs. Harrison Bell, and Mrs. Agnes Dollan to represent it at the International Conference of Labour and Socialist Women at Marseilles in August. The I.L.P. delegates are Miss Margaret Bondfield, Miss Minnie Pallister, and Miss Dorothy Jewson.

##### Our Swimming Champion.

Miss Gemma Harrison has quite recovered from her sudden attack of cramp in the attempt to swim the Channel last week. She hopes to try again in August. During the interval she may go in for the Paris Marathon.

#### LEGAL LADIES.

Clause 28 of the Contributory Pensions Bill provides that if any person is dissatisfied by the award of the Minister in respect of any pensions the question shall be referred to one or more referees selected from a panel of referees. Miss Wilkinson moved an Amendment that at least one of the referees should be a woman, pointing out the advisability of having a woman referee in the hearing of appeals in women's cases. Mr. Neville Chamberlain said he thought the point was already met; because under the Regulations providing for the procedure before the Court of referees it was also provided that wherever a woman was concerned in an application to the referees there should be joined with the referees a woman assessor, and that woman assessor would be a woman who had special competence for dealing with insurance cases. Miss Wilkinson contended that the difficulty was that the advice of assessors might or might not be taken by referees, and the object of her Amendment was to include women among the referees so that they would have equal status with whatever men were judging the case. Mr. Chamberlain said that the body of referees was a body of legal gentlemen, barristers, and there might be some difficulty if it was insisted that one of them should always be a woman. Miss Wilkinson informed him that there were several women barristers. Mr. Chamberlain promised to take that point a bit further, but said that while the assessor must in every case be a woman, where a woman was concerned in the application, there might be some difficulty in insisting that one of the referees should be a woman, who would in every case have a controlling voice in the decisions of the Court. Miss Wilkinson told the right hon. Gentleman that he had already put that point. What she wanted to point out was that in so many cases it was assumed, when speaking of legal bodies, that they must always be gentlemen. There were now bodies of legal ladies, and this was the kind of job which was emphatically their sort of job. She withdrew her Amendment on the understanding that Mr. Chamberlain would bear that fact in mind.

#### SIKH WOMEN'S VICTORY.

The *Times* reports that the Sikh Shrines Bill was passed unanimously on July 7th by the Punjab Legislative Council. Its object is the settlement of a controversy over the guardianship of holy places which has long disturbed the Sikh community in India. The fundamental principle of the measure is the transference of these shrines from the care of the Mahouts to that of representatives of the Sikh congregations, properly elected by adult suffrage to which women are to be admitted. *Stri-Dharma*, the official organ of the Women's Indian Association, in its June issue says: "It has been very fine to read the demand that has been made by the Sikh women for equality of voting powers. We noted last month that the Bill had the defect of ignoring the claims of women to the franchise. This was specially wrong as the Sikh religion recognises the equality of man and woman and the rights of women. There were many meetings held by the Sikh women and demonstrations in Amritsar, demanding equal rights with men in the franchise. In a matter so closely affecting the religion of the Sikhs and their sacred shrines of worship as is this Bill, it is of first importance that the Sikh women should have their voice heard and their equality conceded. We hear, unofficially, that the Government is favourable to admitting the change in the Bill giving the suffrage to women. The Women's Indian Association sent an appeal to the Punjab Government to do justice to Sikh women."

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#### WHERE TO GO.

##### WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

###### LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Saturday, October 10th, at 10.

National Executive Committee, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Friday and Saturday, November 20th and 21st.

Green, White and Gold Fair at Central Hall, Westminster.

Saturday, December 5th, at 10.

National Executive Committee, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

###### SCOTLAND.

July 18th—August 15th.

Clyde Coast Campaign. Meetings at 8 p.m. nightly at the Pier Head, Rothesay, Bute, and at Largs, Dunoon, Millport and Helensburgh during the day.

###### OTHER SOCIETIES.

July 20-27th.

World Federation of Education Associations. Edinburgh.

September 19-27th.

National Council of Women at Birmingham.

#### BRANCH NOTE.

##### DEAL AND WALMER.

An informal meeting of this newly-formed branch was held on Tuesday, July 14th, in the Palm Court Garden, Walmer Castle Hotel, Deal, by kind invitation of Mrs. Juson Kerr, who is acting as Branch President. Both the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer were elected, and we are hoping that as the Branch grows it will become a real power in the neighbourhood. Much interest and enthusiasm has been aroused by Miss Lenton, who, during her short visit, very ably explained all that we women have and have not, also all we want—may need, and intend to have. Her enthusiasm has succeeded in kindling a like keenness in many of our new members, and our President is suggesting Branch meetings once a month, when matters of vital importance will be discussed, and the legal point of many a subject taught. It is surprising how little the average woman, though well educated in other ways, finds she knows of existing laws until she comes in contact with those who not only know all about them, but are ready to work to the death to have them altered by the free hand of Justice. As Hon. Secretary, I should like, in the name of all our new members, to thank Miss Lenton for so successfully organising the format on of this new branch. If we succeed in keeping in touch with her enthusiasm all will be well. (Hon. Sec.) I. ORMAN, 4, The Beach, Walmer, Kent.

#### WOMEN'S BILLS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

##### Guardianship of Infants Bill.

The Lords' Amendments were considered in the House of Commons last week. Mr. Locker-Lampson, on behalf of the Government, said that these Amendments were really drafting Amendments and improved the Bill. They were accepted without discussion.

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

The Lords' Amendments, which were chiefly drafting in character, were considered and agreed to, but the new Clause inserted in the Upper House that "amongst the provisions which may be contained in an order under the principal Act there may be included a provision for the apportionment between the husband and wife of any furniture in the home," etc., was, on the advice of Mr. Locker-Lampson, and after some discussion, rejected in the Commons. A Committee was subsequently appointed to draw up reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing with this Bill, those nominated to this Committee being Mr. Locker-Lampson, Mr. Greaves-Lord, Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, and Mr. Rhys Davies. Both Mr. Pethick-Lawrence and Mr. Rhys Davies expressed themselves in favour of the new clause, although they admitted that there would be difficulty in carrying out its provisions. The reasons for disagreeing with this amendment were reported later and agreed to, and they were communicated to the Lords.

#### OUR OPEN COLUMN.

##### Women on the Slavery Commission.

To the Editor of THE VOTE.

DEAR MADAM,—It is with deep gratitude mingled with relief that I have read in your issue of July 3rd the article recommending the appointment of women on the Slavery Commission of the League of Nations.

The armistice terms with Turkey provided for the release of all prisoners of war. Only men were released. The fact that many scores of thousands (the exact number there are no means of ascertaining) of Christians, chiefly Armenian women and children, have been detained as slaves in Moslem houses since they were deported from their homes in 1915, shows it is high time that women had a voice in this matter which concerns so vitally the honour of womanhood as well as the happiness of homes wrecked already for ten years.

For the nine years of its existence I was Hon. Secretary of the Armenian Red Cross and Refugee Fund, when many sad cases were brought to my notice of women torn from their families and detained by Turks. These have found no redress.

I am, yours faithfully,

(Miss) EMILY J. ROBINSON.

P.S.—In my opinion more than one woman delegate should serve on this Slavery Commission, and they should be chosen from different nationalities. My reason is that last year, at Geneva, the British delegate on the Financial Commission, who was a woman, voted against making a grant for the splendid work being done by the League of Nations Commissioner at Aleppo, Miss Karen Jeppe, in getting many of these women and girls released. Miss Jeppe nominated me as her representative in England. Please do not let this matter drop.—E. J. R.

##### Public Places (Order) Bill.

To the Editor of THE VOTE.

DEAR MADAM,—May I draw your attention to a mistake which originated in Hansard in reporting my speech on the Public Places (Order) Bill? When I was urging the Government to set up a Select Committee which could hear evidence from any quarters, a member made an interjection which I accepted; this was reported as "and prostitutes?" As a matter of fact, the member was Mr. J. H. Hayes, who is himself an ex-policeman, and the interjection he made was "and constables?"—a suggestion which I repeated and accepted. I cannot think how the words came to be confused; but Mr. Hayes himself brought the matter to my notice, and it will appear correctly in the bound volumes of Hansard.

Yours faithfully,

NANCY ASTOR.

##### What is Open Court?

To the Editor of THE VOTE.

The following correspondence has taken place between the Secretary of the Women's Freedom League and the Home Office.

THE RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM JOYNSON-HICKS, M.P.

SIR,—It is reported that the *Newspaper World* recently brought before your notice that at a recent Court in Northamptonshire the reporters were asked to leave the Court whilst summonses for non-payment of Income Tax were heard, and that it has received an assurance from the Home Office that no case can be heard, tried, determined or adjudged by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction except in Open Court.

May we ask for a clear definition of Open Court? You will probably remember that we have brought before your notice cases in which women were excluded from the Court when certain cases were being tried. We are loth to infer that an Open Court is one in which the Press are included and from which the public or any section of the public are excluded, and we should be most grateful if you would kindly let us know what in your view constitutes an Open Court in which alone a case can be heard, tried, determined, or adjudged.

Awaiting the favour of your reply,

I am, etc.,  
(Sgd.) FLORENCE UNDERWOOD.

MADAM,—In reply to your letter of 13th inst., I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that no case of the description referred to in the first paragraph of your letter can be heard by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction except in open Court. As your Society is aware, sections 111 and 114 of the Children Act, 1908, empower the Justices to exclude members of the public from the Court in certain cases where the interests of children are involved. I am to add that in the opinion of the Secretary of State the expression "Open Court" means a Court to which members of the public, including representatives of the Press, are admitted.

I am, etc.,

(Sgd.) N.B. SIMPSON.

[The Women's Freedom League is quite aware of the provisions of the Children Act. What its members have complained of to the Home Secretary, on more than one occasion, is that women have been asked, and even intimidated, to leave the Court during cases of indecency, or sexual offences in which girls or women and sometimes children have been involved, and when men have not been asked to leave the Court. However, we are grateful for the opinion of the Secretary of State as to the meaning of "Open Court."—Ed.]

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