

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

The Need for Women Police.

WOMEN POLICE are needed, not to take the place of men, but to serve with them in the Police Force for the common good, and with duties having special reference to women and children.

WHY HAVE WOMEN POLICE?

1. Because: Certain Police Duties can be undertaken more suitably by women than by men:—
 - A. Taking statements from women and children, whether victims or witnesses, in all cases connected with sexual offences, such as:—
 - (a) Criminal and indecent assaults.
 - (b) Indecent exposure.
 - (c) Abortion.
 - (d) Infanticide.
 - (e) Concealment of birth.
 - B.
 - (a) Attending women and children at court.
 - (b) Watching female prisoners (cases of attempted suicide in hospital, etc.).
 - (c) Searching, escorting and supervision of women prisoners.
2. Because: "It is specially with regard to two evils, Juvenile Crime and Prostitution, that the preventive work of the Police can be done by policewomen." (*Report of H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary, 1919.*)

THE PRESENT POSITION.

In England, Scotland and Wales there are 63,230 Policemen
and only 166 Policewomen.

In England there are 99 Policewomen in the Provinces.

50 " " " " Metropolis.

In Scotland, 5 forces employ a total of 17 policewomen.

In Wales there are no policewomen.

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WHAT SOME CHIEF CONSTABLES SAY (1929).

BIRMINGHAM: "Women Police have been an unqualified success."

BOLTON: "The Women Police justify their existence."

CHESTERFIELD: "Her services have proved very valuable and the experiment quite successful."

NOTTINGHAM: "The two policewomen employed by this Force do very useful work."

EASTBOURNE: "The services of the Policewomen in this County Borough have proved to be most valuable and certainly justified in every way."

TUNBRIDGE WELLS: "Much useful work is accomplished."

SCOTLAND: "H.M. Inspector was satisfied that the employment of policewomen was justified in some police districts especially in the industrial and thickly populated areas. He thought the question was worthy of consideration by police authorities and Chief Constables."

(Scotland. *H.M. Inspector's Report for 1929.*
Glasgow Herald, 18th July, 1930.)

SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

1. *That preventive work is outside the scope of Police work and is better done by Voluntary Workers.*

Preventive work is now recognised as an essential part of Police work.

"We acknowledge the good work done during the War by unofficial bodies of women. We are, however, convinced that such work must in future be entrusted to women under the direct orders of Police." (*Report of Home Office Committee, 1920.*)

Work on Preventive lines is included in the duties of Women Police at Birmingham, Bristol, Colchester, Folkestone, Eastbourne, Oxford, Reading, etc.

2. *That the Expense of the Police Force would be increased.*

It is suggested that, for the present, the number of women employed should not exceed 1 per cent. of the total Police Force. In addition to the duties mentioned above, they would be trained in and be available for other duties in co-operation with men police; such as, detective duties, raids on betting-houses, enquiries and investigations, etc.

WOMEN POLICE.

List of duties in operation in Glasgow as printed in League of Nations Official Publication *re* Employment of Women in the Police, 1927:—

CLASS I. Work which can obviously be more suitably undertaken by women than men; i.e., sexual offences against and all cases involving women and children, such as:—

- (a) Indecent assault;
- (b) Indecent exposure;
- (c) Rape and attempt to ravish;
- (d) Criminal assault and all other offences under the Criminal Law Amendment Acts;
- (e) Bigamy;
- (f) Abortion;
- (g) Concealment of pregnancy;
- (h) Child murder;
- (i) Overlaying children;
- (j) Sudden death of infants;
- (k) Searching women prisoners;
- (l) Taking information from female prisoners or witnesses in hospitals or other institutions;
- (m) Escorting, on all occasions, female prisoners;
- (n) Assisting in brothel cases;
- (o) Making inquiries as to the circumstances, &c., of female prisoners awaiting trial; and
- (p) Inquiries for Ministry of Pensions relating to the behaviour of women pensioners.

CLASS II. Work suitable for a woman because of her sex, and because, in these particular cases, she would be less noticeable than a man. Such work includes:—

- (a) Taking charge of juvenile cases, such as theft, malicious mischief, street trading;
- (b) Observations in cases of pocket-picking, shop-lifting, stealing, brothels, shebeens, &c.;
- (c) Visiting dancing halls, picture houses, theatres, music halls, &c.;
- (d) Making certain inquiries for Government Departments and Police Authorities; and
- (e) Fortune-telling, palmistry, &c.

SEE OVER.

CLASS III. Work usually undertaken by men, but equally suitable for women. This relieves the men, and fills in the spare time of the women. Such work includes:—

- (a) Patrolling streets, parks, open spaces, &c.;
- (b) Supervising pawns;
- (c) Supervising servants' registries;
- (d) Visiting railway stations, fering markets, &c., show-grounds; and
- (e) Making inquiries *re* lost property, pensions, aliens, cases of fraud, cases of common assault on women or girls, street accidents to women and children.

CLASS IV. Special work, such as:—

- (a) Attending to female prisoners in the High Court;
- (b) Attending at High Court whenever there are female witnesses (Judges have frequently requested the help of the Women Police);
- (c) Making inquiries *re* missing relatives, &c.;
- (d) Assisting detective officers by typing reports for them when there is a special rush of work;
- (e) Taking observations in the vicinity of schools *re* molestation of children; and
- (f) Reporting children found suffering from venereal disease, in immoral or unsuitable surroundings, in a dirty condition, badly cared for, cruelly treated, or mentally defective.

In the districts in which there are Women Police, they attend to their own cases. In other districts the services of a woman are requisitioned through the Criminal Investigation Department.

Weekly reports will be sent to Headquarters.

National Council of Women.

MURRAY HOUSE, VANDON STREET, BUCKINGHAM GATE,
LONDON, S.W.1.

OFFICIAL POLICEWOMEN.

The consistent policy of **The National Council of Women** has been to secure Official Policewomen, by having women included in the scope of the **Police Acts** for every purpose.

This has actually been accomplished. But, while **no further legislation is needed** to secure the position of women, strong pressure of educated public opinion is needed to ensure the application of the **Police Acts to policewomen.**

HISTORY OF POLICEWOMEN UP TO 1922

Origin. In September 1914, the National Council of Women was authorised by the Government to organise **Voluntary Women Patrols**, working under the authorisation and approval of the Police Authorities of the area. All over the country hundreds of Voluntary Women Patrols gave their part time services in the interests of order and decency, and the care of women and girls. **Their successful work led directly to the demand for official policewomen** to carry on and to expand a task of which women had proved themselves capable.

Growth. The next step was to make a Voluntary Patrol into a **Full Time Paid Official Patrol.** There were **two difficulties:** (1) **Finance.** (2) **Legality.** But (1) in 1916, under D.O.R.A. a Police Act **enabled the PAY of whole time Policewomen** in England and Wales to become chargeable to the **Police Fund**, and (2) **The question of legality** after being variously interpreted by different Police Authorities, was **definitely settled** by the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919.

In 1916, therefor, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police appointed 30 of the Voluntary Women Patrols as paid whole time patrols, auxiliary to the Police, in Hyde Park and other parts of London. In the Report for 1917 of H.M. Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales, Provincial Policewomen are mentioned in several large cities, and in 1918 there came into being the **First Force of Official Policewomen** the **Metropolitan Police Women Patrols** with an authorised strength of 1 Superintendent (Mrs Stanley), 1 Assistant Superintendent, 10 Sergeants and 100 Women Patrols.

Standardisation. Though "policewomen" were being employed in many areas, the practice of the Police Authorities as to duties, pay, conditions

and training in different districts varied greatly. A Committee under Major Baird was set up by the Home Office in 1920 to report on the need of Women in the Police Employment on their duties, and conditions of service. "Not only scope, but urgent need for Policewomen" was the unanimous finding of the Baird Committee in 1921; to co-ordinate their work, a **Woman Assistant Inspector of Constabulary** should be appointed. **Standardisation of pay and conditions of service** was also recommended. The Home Office circularised all Police Authorities on the Report.

In the Police (Pensions) Act of 1921, for the first time in legislation, "Policewomen" are specifically mentioned.

TRAINING SCHOOLS.

Bristol inaugurated the first training-school for policewomen with Miss D. O. G. Peto, O.B.E., as director.

In Scotland through the far-sighted policy of the **National Vigilance Association (Scotland)** Miss Millar was attached to the Glasgow Police Force to take statements in cases of sexual crime in 1915. From 1918-1920 the **Scottish Training School for Policewomen** operated in Glasgow, under Miss Tancred. Facilities for Training were given by the Corporation of Glasgow, and the Training School became the centre of vigorous educative propaganda work in Scotland.

Liverpool also started a Training School under Miss Cowlin, which still continues as the **Liverpool Women Police Patrois** (present Director, Miss Peto). The three Training Schools formed a **Federation** for propaganda work from 1918 to 1921, receiving a generous grant from the Carnegie Trustees.

In 1921 the Training Schools in Bristol and Glasgow were closed in accordance with the recommendation of the Baird Committee, 1920, that **Chief Constables would select and train their own policewomen.**

In August 1919, the preliminary question of Finance was settled by the Scottish Office Circular (1485) which allowed claims on the Police Grant for the pay and clothing of full time policewomen in Scotland.

As in England, the question of the legality of attesting women in the police force was settled by the Act of December, 1919. Edinburgh, therefore, in that year appointed a policewoman: Glasgow sanctioned the appointment of ten policewomen.

1922 AND AFTER.

The need for policewomen and their usefulness in the performance of those duties for which they were specially suited had been fully proved. In June 1921, the Home Secretary said: "If Women Police are employed they must be employed properly. With regard to the Metropolitan Police the few women police we have are exceedingly valuable."

All over the country public opinion was growing, so that when, in February 1922, the **Committee on National Expenditure** ("Geddes Axe") proposed to abolish the force of Metropolitan Police Patrols in the name of "Economy," a widespread protest was made. Women's Societies of all kinds took action, and Parliament, convinced of the unexpected strength

and sincerity of the demand for policewomen, reversed the decision, although the number was largely reduced.

The controversy of 1922 left authorities in some uncertainty, and in 1924 a **second Committee**, representative of every party and of the Police authorities, with Mr Bridgman as Chairman, was appointed "to review the experience now available in regard to the employment of Women Police in England and Wales and to make recommendations as to their future organisation and duties." It reported that "the efficiency of the Police Service has been improved by the employment of Policewomen," and that statements of women and children in sexual cases should be taken by policewomen. **Policewomen should**, as an integral part of the force, **make the declaration** of a constable, the Baird Committee's rates of pay and pension should be adopted, and again the appointment of a **Woman Assistant-Inspector of Constabulary** was recommended. The report was sent by the Home Office to all Police Authorities in England and Wales. This important pronouncement of policy was followed in 1926 by a deputation representative of all the chief Women's Societies, organised by the **N.C.W.** to the Home Office, where the Secretary for Scotland also attended. The Home Secretary promised to send out a circular, pointing out how few policewomen had as yet been appointed, in spite of "their undoubted success," and to give an example by adding to the number of Metropolitan Policewomen who are under the immediate Control of the H.O. Circulars, therefore, were issued in 1927 by both the Home Office and the Scottish Office, drawing attention to the question of Numbers.

A further Scottish Office Circular (No. 2170), issued in 1927, touches on the question of Duties. Reviewing the Report of the Departmental Committee on Sexual offences against children and young persons in Scotland, attention is directed to the recommendation that in order to have policewomen to take precognitions in such cases, and to give "other suitable duties to occupy their time more fully," "the experiment might be made in some of the larger Burghs, as well as in Glasgow, of employing uniformed policewomen to make a systematic patrol of parks and open spaces frequented by children." The Secretary for State reminds Police Authorities that he has already requested them on general grounds "to consider the question of appointing policewomen where circumstances justify that course," and that "the result may be that a greater number of policewomen than at present will be available for the duties referred to."

Meanwhile, the list of Duties suitable for Policewomen, which was drawn up by the **Chief Constable of Glasgow**, has been printed by the **League of Nations** (Report on Employment of Women in the Police) as a standard. It includes enquiring into Sexual Offences in all cases involving Women and Children: taking precognitions; making observation and enquiries; patrolling streets and open spaces; attending at High Court; escorting female prisoners; reporting children found badly cared for or cruelly treated or in immoral surroundings.

The Report of the Street Offences Committee, 1928, recognises "a

special sphere of usefulness for Women Police" in dealing with offences against the law in connection with prostitution and the maintenance of decency and good order in streets and public places.

The Report of the Royal Commission, 1929, on Police Powers and Procedure devotes chapter ix. to a survey of the question of Women Police and sums up as follows:—"We are satisfied, from the evidence laid before us, that the time is ripe for a substantial increase in their numbers."

Recent deputations (March and April, 1929) from influential women's organisations have received assurances of their appreciation of Women Police from the leaders of the three political parties in the House of Commons—Mr Baldwin, Mr Ramsay MacDonald and Mr Lloyd George—Mr Baldwin intimated a "substantial increase" of the Metropolitan policewomen.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

Women, then, are within the Police Acts for all purposes. Two Committees of Enquiry and a Royal Commission have declared that Policewomen are urgently needed in all large centres and their employment has increased the efficiency of the force. The Home Office and the Scottish Office have said that they are so much in favour of the movement that the deputation of 1926 was "pushing an open door." They have made recommendations as to pay and pension: the Secretary of State for Scotland has made specific suggestions as to Duties to "the larger burghs."

AND YET.

In England and Wales, including London,	there are 56,700 policemen,
	147 policewomen.
In Scotland	there are 6,530 policemen,
	16 policewomen.

Many "large centres" and many "larger burghs" have no policewomen at all.

No Regulations have been made as to the Duties of Policewomen.

WHAT IS STILL NEEDED.

1. Education of Public Opinion in every large city so that the citizens may secure a sufficient body of Policewomen, used for those duties which are specially suitable for them.

2. The adoption by ALL the Police Authorities of those model duties for women, which have been proved successful by several large cities.

3. The issue of Statutory Regulations for Women, on the lines of the 1919 Police Act for Men, in order to standardise conditions and to secure the best recruits.

4. The appointment of a Woman Assistant Inspector of Constabulary.

EVERY CITIZEN SHOULD TAKE A PART IN PUSHING THE DOOR WIDE OPEN.

3. That it would be difficult to employ Policewomen in Rural Areas.

A mobile force of policewomen, attached to County headquarters, could be employed. This is done with success in Gloucestershire, which has a force of 8 policewomen, 4 of whom cover rural areas by means of motor cycles.

"We have been much impressed by the evidence of their value and efficiency in this County." (*Report of Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure, 1929.*)

ORGANISATION OF WOMEN POLICE.

The Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure, 1929, recommended that, where a considerable number of policewomen are employed, there should be a chief woman of sufficient rank to have access to the Chief Constable.

The value of this recommendation was realised by the present Commissioner for the Metropolis, and great satisfaction has been felt in the appointment of Miss D. Peto, O.B.E., as adviser to the Commissioner on all matters concerning the training and organization of the women police in the Metropolitan Force.

It is equally important that a woman should be appointed at the Home Office, to undertake similar duties with regard to Women Police in the Provinces.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The National Council of Women therefore asks:—

1. That, in view of the growing demand for policewomen, the Home Secretary would appoint a Woman Inspector of Constabulary at the Home Office, one of whose duties should be to advise Chief Constables in all matters affecting the appointment, selection, training and duties of provincial policewomen.
2. That the Home Secretary would draft regulations with regard to the duties, appointment, pay, etc., of Women Police, in pursuance of his powers under the Police Act, 1919, for consideration by the Police Council, with a view to the early establishment of an adequate force of policewomen throughout the country.

September, 1930.

Published by the Women Police Sectional Committee of the National Council of Women, Murray House, Vandon Street, S.W.1. Price 1d. Special terms for a large number of copies.

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