

Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

MONTHLY PAPER.

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APRIL, 1910.

SPECIAL AND URGENT.

**TRAFALGAR SQUARE
DEMONSTRATION,**

April 2nd, 3 o'clock.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ANDERTON'S HOTEL, FLEET STREET,

April 26th, 8 o'clock.

THE MONTH.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

BEFORE we again address our readers the League will have entered upon a new year of work with a new Committee. We cannot too strongly emphasize the importance of the election of the Committee. That there should be in so large a society some who are not satisfied with the work accomplished is not only inevitable, it is desirable. A little more "noble discontent" among men would be good for "votes for women." Hence it is specially desirable that the men elected to serve on April 26th should be really representative of the Society. Those who do not take the trouble first to nominate and then to be present and vote for the men in whose judgment they place confidence must not complain if in the result the League shall take a direction in which they are unable to follow.

We are faced with the usual difficulties that always beset a young cause. First we have a government with a huge majority, then we get parties so evenly balanced that ministers are practically in the hands of any compact body of members with a single policy. The two bodies which since January have been in this happy position are not primarily working for Women's Suffrage. Such are the conditions. We hope every member of the League will keep his mind firmly fixed on our cause and do his best to work out the problem of our true policy.

It is possible—though undoubtedly dangerous—to infer that the trend of affairs is favourable to us. Thus the new Home Secretary has made a pronouncement regarding technical offences by women Suffragists which is practically a tardy recognition of their claims to special treatment, which Mr. Gladstone

so obstinately denied. Mr. Churchill has also had the honour of presenting to the House a petition for the enfranchisement of women signed by 5,000 of his constituents in Dundee.

Another interesting sign is the activity of the new People's Suffrage League. We as a League, like all the previously existing Suffrage societies, have always, on grounds now widely recognized, declined to enter into discussions as to the true basis of the franchise, and have advocated the inclusion of women on the present, or any other, electoral system. Adult Suffragists have attacked us from their point of view, and hitherto we have, not unnaturally, suspected their *bona fides*. Now, though we cannot all of us agree with their contentions, we are at least glad that they are doing something of a practical character. Their existence as a society means that while the non-party societies are advancing in their own lines the official parties are also being pressed from within their ranks. The Conservative and Unionist Associations and the People's Suffrage Society ought to wield tremendous power, providing they will stick to their guns *and fire!* For ourselves we still believe that the real Suffrage work in this country must be done under the non-party banner, until such time as one or other party officially puts our cause upon its programme. Then our way will be clear.

In the meantime one very important fact is brought to our notice in the Committee's Annual Report which members will be asked to adopt on April 26th. The retiring Committee is finally convinced that the work of the League has now reached a stage at which the old system of voluntary workers must be effectively supplemented. For three years the League has advanced steadily under the old system; new avenues of advance are opening in every direction into which we cannot enter, solely because all our voluntary workers are men who are busily engaged in earning their living till the evening.

The first consequence of this is that to all intents and purposes we are confined to the London area. There are several embryo branches whose members are faced by similar difficulties. What is obviously required is a man permanently engaged who can be sent for two or three days to help such a society and set it going. It is true that a number of our branches and affiliated societies are forging ahead splendidly; but if we had had a paid organizer to help with the spade work we should have been ten times as powerful in the provinces.

The Committee unanimously agreed at the last executive meeting that such a step must immediately be taken, and it is hoped that members will not only recognize the force of the

recommendation, but will by increasing their subscriptions enable the new Committee to give immediate effect to it.

We are asked to draw the attention of our members to the striking success of the International Women's Franchise Club, which is commodiously housed at 66, Russell Square. A new smoking room is to be opened early in April, and the formal public inauguration of the Club is fixed for Friday, April 8th. The opening will take the form of a dinner to those Members of the new House of Commons who put Women's Suffrage in their election addresses. About 200 persons have already taken tickets for the dinner. The subscription to the Club, which is rapidly becoming a centre for Suffragists, is as yet only one guinea per annum, and there is no entrance fee.

We commend our readers' attention to two admirable articles by Mr. John Galsworthy in *The Nation* on the 19th and 26th of March. Speakers will find them exceedingly stimulating. Mr. Galsworthy writes, as one would expect of him, with finely imaginative sympathy; he bases his plea on the broad ground of Equity, and is perhaps not the less impressive because he is even prepared to grant the political superiority of men, and granting that, yet to claim that the enfranchisement of women is the only possible means of securing the right relation between the sexes.

Mr. R. F. Cholmeley has been administering wisdom to Dr. Heber Hart in *The Englishwoman* for April.

We are interested to see that Miss Cleghorn of Sheffield has been elected vice-president of the National Union of Teachers, which means that she will be President next year. She received over 25,000 votes, the second place being held by a man with 18,000 odd votes.

Mr. Simpson would be glad to hear from any members of the Men's League who may be found in the ranks of Commercial Travellers, in order that some organised effort may be made towards the opening of a campaign by those gentlemen who in the nature of their calling are enabled to visit a large number of towns.

THE PROPOSED DEPUTATION.

THE PREMIER'S REPLY.

In pursuance of our announcement, made last session, that we proposed to renew our request for an audience to the Prime Minister, a letter was sent to him to that effect. It was pointed out that, in addition to the important facts which we desired to lay before him last year, we now had special and recent facts, material to the progress of the movement among men as evidenced during the General Election.

Subjoined is the Prime Minister's reply. Since the Executive has not yet considered the letter, we are not able to say what line will now be taken. That course of action will necessarily depend on the political situation created by the Parliamentary impasse with the resulting probability of an immediate General Election.

March 15th, 10, Downing Street,
Whitehall, S.W.

DEAR SIR,—I am desired by the Prime Minister to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, in which you suggest that he should receive a deputation from the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, and to say in reply that whilst Mr. Asquith does not conceive that any useful purpose would be served by the adoption of your suggestion at the present juncture, he will be glad to consider any facts that you may wish to bring to his notice in writing.

I am your obedient servant,
J. NASH.

J. Malcolm Mitchell, Esq.

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OPEN-AIR CAMPAIGN.

The Open-Air Campaign began on the first Sunday in March, and has been since continued with great success. The Sub-Committee intended that Hyde Park only should be worked during March and possibly April, but it is hoped that the number of speakers will soon grow large enough to allow the League to begin operations in other parks, as was the case last summer. Several schemes for co-operation with other societies are under consideration, and, if they can be carried out, should help to further the usefulness of our work very materially.

The open-air demonstration which the League has organized in Trafalgar Square on April 2nd should prove, if the weather is at all fine, one worthy of the cause, and all members are strongly urged to do their best to turn up and help the League by swelling the number of supporters. Help in various ways—literature selling and distributing—is urgently needed.

This is the second demonstration of its kind held by the League, and it is hoped that, favoured by fine weather, it will be a great success. Every member of the League who can come will help, especially if he wears his League badge.

SPEAKERS.

The speakers are expected to be as follows. On the north plinth the chairman will be Mr. Herbert Jacobs, who will be supported by Mrs. Manson, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., and Mr. Lawrence Housman. The east plinth will be under the presidency of Mr. H. Y. Kennedy, who will have the help of Miss Cicely Corbett, Dr. Josiah Oldfield, Mr. John Manson, and Mr. E. Duval. In the west plinth will be Mr. J. M. Mitchell, with Miss Georgina Brackenbury, Mr. H. Baillie-Weaver, Mr. Th. Gugenheim, and Mr. Cyril Yaldwyn.

THE RESOLUTION.

Simultaneously at 4 o'clock the following resolution will be put from all the platforms:—

“That the exclusion of women from the franchise is both unjust to women and detrimental to the best interests of the State, and that this meeting urges upon the Government the necessity of conferring the Parliamentary Franchise upon women at the earliest possible moment.”

Speakers during March were:—

March 6.—J. M. Mitchell, Herbert Jacobs, Th. Gugenheim, H. J. Kennedy, Mrs. Nevinson, C. Yaldwyn, and Dr. Macpherson.
March 13.—Th. Gugenheim, J. M. Mitchell, Cyril Yaldwyn.
March 20.—Th. Gugenheim, Miss C. W. Corbett, Mr. Craufurd, and John Simpson.
March 27.—Th. Gugenheim, E. Duval, Cyril Yaldwyn, John Simpson.

NORTH ST. PANCRAS.

FOLLOWING upon the election canvass in this constituency, a meeting was held in the Baths, Prince of Wales's Road, Kentish Town, on Monday, March 21st, Mrs. Holman in the chair. The speakers were Lady Emily Lutyens, Miss Helen Fraser, the Hon. Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G., and J. Malcolm Mitchell. The meeting was an experimental one, organized chiefly by Mrs. Thos. G. Rogers, Mrs. Harrington, and Miss Thompson, aided by Mr. Rogers, Mr. Holman, and other local members of the Men's League. The audience, though not large, was of a very good type, and yielded a number of converts.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CANDIDATES.

We understand that the National Union has decided to run candidates at the next General Election in constituencies where the sitting member holds his seat by only a small majority, and is an Anti-Suffragist. Several members of the League will probably consent to stand.

It is true that in Rossendale Mr. A. K. Bulley obtained only 670 votes at the General Election. The contest took place in a constituency where the candidate attacked was a Cabinet Minister, and personally popular. It is argued by many Suffragists that a similar policy ought not to do worse in other constituencies, and the same success would, where the majorities are narrow, in all probability lead to the rejection of many Anti-Suffragists, and indirectly to preferential selection of candidates who are favourable to our cause.

The situation is full of possibilities, and will unquestionably afford food for thought to the official party organizers.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND AMATEUR ACTING.

ON March 9th there were two very successful performances in Cambridge of 'Press Cuttings' and of 'How the Vote was Won,' for the benefit of the Cambridge Women's Suffrage Association and of the University Men's League for Women's Suffrage. Mr. A. F. Greig, of Peterhouse, the Secretary of the latter Society, gave a very clever and entertaining representation of General Mitchener (alias Bones in the revised version of 'Press Cuttings'), while Mr. H. M. Butler of Magdalene made a perfectly delightful Balsquith (alias Jones). Mr. Allen Walkins of St. John's played the Orderly with very good effect in 'Press Cuttings,' and also the more difficult and less "grateful" part of Horace Cole in 'How the Vote was Won.' The chief women's parts were taken by Miss Seymour Thompson (a lady who had already acted several times in 'How the Vote was Won' and whose playing was quite of an expert order), Miss Catharine Marshall, Secretary of the Keswick and Cumberland Suffrage Society, and Miss Hankinson, a member of the London Fabian Society. The Lady Corinthia, Mrs. Banger, and Mrs. Farrell of these ladies were particularly clever productions.

The performers one and all had devoted themselves to their task in a most thorough and careful way, and had spared neither time nor trouble in rehearsing and in perfecting their rôles; there was consequently a professional finish about their acting rare in amateur performances. They had the satisfaction of playing to full audiences; and they thus not only helped to spread the Suffrage gospel, but to fill the rather empty tills of the two Societies, a clear profit of about £17 being made. In the interests of national gaiety as well as in those of the "Cause," it is greatly to be hoped that these really able players will before long repeat their performances in other places than Cambridge.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

MEMBERS are specially asked to send in their subscriptions as soon as possible, in order that the new Committee, on taking office, may succeed to a good working balance at the bank.

TRANSFERRING VOTES.

WE have received a letter from a lady suggesting that men who are keen on Women's Suffrage should place their Parliamentary votes at the disposal of women, or even of Suffrage Societies. If such a plan were carried out widely, it would mean that candidates and canvassers would have to approach women as the temporary custodians of the votes.

This plan, we are informed, has been put into operation already with some success, and a number of men have done the same privately. Whether this League or any other Society will adopt the proposal we cannot say. It will be laid before our Executive on Tuesday next, April 5th.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WE have received the following letter from a member of the League who has been speaking a good deal in the North. We shall be glad to hear from any friends who are able to help on the lines indicated.

DEAR SIR,—We are extremely anxious to press forward the movement in Yorkshire.

Towns such as Huddersfield, Dewsbury, and other centres where there is a dense population of working class men, offer a splendid field for energetic workers. And any members who can devote a few hours to open air work may depend on large and enthusiastic audiences, only too willing to be converted.

The only attitude adopted so far in these districts is one of apathy, the ridiculous arguments of the Anti-Suffragist have not been scattered broadcast, and with a little effort there should be no difficulty in forming many strong and enthusiastic branches in these districts.

Will any gentlemen able and willing to open a campaign kindly communicate with the Secretary.

Yours very truly,
J. SIMPSON.

SUFFRAGIST PRISONERS.

THE following is the reply given to Mr. John O'Connor by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons on March 15th (*The Times*, March 16th):—

"I have given my best consideration to this subject with reference not solely to the treatment of woman suffragist prisoners, but generally to the regulations which govern the treatment of those whom the hon. member calls 'political' prisoners. I do not feel that any differences of prison treatment should be based upon a consideration of the motives which actuated the offender. Motives are for the Courts to appraise, and it must be presumed that all due consideration has been given to them in any sentence which is imposed. It is, however, my duty, in carrying out the various Acts of Parliament, and the regulations made under them, to secure that the treatment of prisoners should not be inappropriate or harmful. I feel, as did my predecessor, that prison rules, which are suitable to criminals guilty of dishonesty, or cruelty, or other crimes implying moral turpitude, should not be applied inflexibly to those whose general character is good, and whose offences, however reprehensible, do not involve personal dishonour. (Hear, hear.) I propose, therefore, to give power to the Prison Commissioners, under the direction of the Secretary of State, to mitigate in such cases the conditions of prison treatment which are generally regarded as of a degrading character; and, in order to effect this, I propose to lay upon the table the following rule, which will acquire statutory force in the ordinary

manner: 'In the case of any offender of the Second or Third Division whose previous character is good, and who has been convicted of, or committed to prison for, an offence not involving dishonesty, cruelty, indecency, or serious violence, the Prison Commissioners may allow such amelioration of the conditions prescribed in the foregoing rules as the Secretary of State may approve in respect of the wearing of prison clothing, bathing, hair-cutting, cleaning of cells, employment, exercise, books, and otherwise. Provided that no such amelioration shall be greater than that granted under the rules for offenders of the First Division.' (Hear, hear.)"

BRANCH NEWS.

WE are glad to announce that a Portsmouth society has been formed, and has applied to be adopted as a branch of the League. The Honorary Secretary is Mr. Daniel L. Lipson, 11, Inglis Road, Southsea, who will be glad to receive names of intending members.

As the rules submitted are in accordance with the usual plan, the branch will presumably be adopted at the first meeting of the Executive in April.

LIVERPOOL.

CO-OPERATING with the Women's Freedom League a very successful open-air meeting was held at the Wellington Column on March 3rd, and on March 9th another good meeting was held at S. Domingo Pit. Our last monthly "At Home," on March 14, was very successful except for a poor attendance of our own members. The chair was taken by Mr. T. A. Patterson, and addresses were given by Frank L. Joseph, Esq., C.C., and Dr. Alice Ker. During the coming month we hope to organize and inaugurate our summer campaign. ARTHUR R. ALLERTON.

BOURNEMOUTH.

ON Tuesday evening the members and friends of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage were entertained at an "At Home" given by Mrs. Rowe at St. Anne's, Surrey Road. A musical programme was rendered by Mr. Chas. Fletcher, Miss Louise Gilchrist, Miss T. Fonblanque, and Miss F. E. Lever. The chief event of the evening was Miss Abadam's address, in which she dwelt upon the work done by the Men's League in championing the cause of those who are at the present time politically helpless and bound. She drew a parallel between the noble harmony with which the company had been entertained by the united music of violin and piano and the harmony which the union of man's mind with woman's will produce in the legislature of the State. A very interesting discussion was held concerning the difficulties and ways and means of overcoming them in this question of the emancipation of women. We secured three new members. W. L. HULL, Hon. Sec.

234, Old Christchurch Road.

SUSSEX MEN'S LEAGUE. BRIGHTON BRANCH.

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING for the members of the Sussex League will be held in the Council Chamber, Royal Pavilion, Brighton, at 7 P.M., on Tuesday, April 19th, when a proposal for opening an office in Brighton and having a paid secretary will be brought forward. An interim report will also be read, and a President and Vice-Presidents will be elected. This General Meeting will be followed by a demonstration at 8.15 P.M. at the Royal Pavilion, and an appeal will be made for funds for carrying out the proposals of the General Meeting. The Chairman will be Mr. A. O. Jennings, LL.B., and Mr. Laurence Housman, Mr. H. Baillie-Weaver, and Miss M. F. Basden are amongst those who have promised to speak. Miss Decima Moore has very kindly promised to recite.

At a meeting of the Committee on March 14th Mr. G. S. Godfree, Clerk of the Peace for the Borough of Brighton, was elected Chairman of the Committee for the year.

HASTINGS BRANCH.

At a meeting held at the London Road Office of the Hastings and St. Leonards Women's Suffrage Propaganda League at St. Leonards on Monday evening, February 28th, a men's branch of the Union was formed, after an interesting explanatory meeting.

On the proposition of the Chairman, Col. A. R. Savile, seconded by Mr. Adrian Brunel, it was unanimously decided to form a men's branch to be known as "The Hastings and St. Leonards Branch of the Sussex Men's League for Women's Suffrage."

Mr. Slade, in proposing the election of the Chairman as Hon. Secretary pro tem., said he believed good work had been accomplished during the recent election by both local branches engaged in propaganda work on behalf of the Women's Suffrage question. (Applause.)

Mr. Watson seconded, and the motion was unanimously carried.

Messrs. Slade, Barclay, Hanbury, E. Smith, and Watson were appointed to act as a small committee pro tem.

A cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Baillie-Weaver, who had given a greatly appreciated address, concluded the meeting.

All the gentlemen present consented to become members of the newly formed League.

The committee have undertaken a house-to-house canvass.

A. R. SAVILE, Lieut.-Col., Hon. Sec.

9, Holmesdale Gardens, Hastings.

WORTHING.

A PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE is being formed.

ADRIAN BRUNEL, Hon. Sec.

61, Norway Street, Portslade, Sussex.

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