

THE VOTE.
JAN. 15, 1926.

THE EQUAL SUFFRAGE FIGHT.

THE VOTE

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

VOL. XXVII. No. 847.

(Registered at
the G.P.O.)

ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 1926

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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By M. Chave Collisson.

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WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

(MID-LONDON BRANCH)

ARE ARRANGING A

PUBLIC MEETING

AT THE

Caxton Hall, Westminster,

ON

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19th, at 7.30 p.m.

TO DEMAND

VOTES FOR WOMEN

ON THE

SAME TERMS AS MEN

SPEAKERS:

MRS. PETHICK LAWRENCE.

MISS EMILY PHIPPS, B.A. (BARRISTER-AT-LAW).

MISS ELLEN WILKINSON, M.P.

FRANK BRIANT, Esq., M.P.

Lieut.-Commander Hon. J. M. KENWORTHY, M.P.

(Engagements permitting.)

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WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

First English Woman Telephone Operator.

Mrs. Heywood, who had the credit of being the first woman to perform the duties of telephone operator in England, has just died at her home in Liverpool. When the telephone was introduced into this country, boys were employed as operators. Liverpool gave the lead in employing young women, and Mrs. Heywood, then Miss Ling, was the first trained operator turned out by Mrs. Claxton, the first telephone instructress. It was not until the late 'eighties that the change from male to female operators was completed in London.

Police Court Matron's Long Record.

Mrs. Welburn, of Hull, the Police Court Matron for that city, has just retired on pension, after serving for nearly 40 years. During her long period of service she had thousands of women prisoners under her care, and her kindly nature was of enormous benefit to the women to whom she rendered service. Mrs. Welburn succeeded her mother, who had the previous charge of the women prisoners, whilst her father was a member of the Hull City police force, and retired on pension many years ago.

Woman Doctor's Appointment.

The duties of Miss Florence Jack, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Medical Adviser to the National Milk Publicity Council, will be the delivery of lectures on diet to the council's lecturers, and to audiences of mothers, nurses, and welfare workers in all parts of the country. She will also conduct experiments on the effect of giving schoolchildren an extra daily ration of milk. Dr. Jack was chosen out of 60 candidates.

Woman Dress Designer's Salary.

Miss Doris Reid, a Canadian girl—daughter of a Toronto financier—is the world's highest-paid woman worker, with the exception of the Hollywood stars. She has secured a contract with a firm of dressmakers as designer at £20,000 a year. Even in America, the land of many high-salaried workers, £5,000 a year is regarded as a high standard of pay.

Putting Man in his Place.

"Mrs. George A. Bartlett and husband" was the entry recently made in the register at the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, and when a reporter tackled the lady on the subject she tersely replied, "It's merely one of the wifely privileges of a 50-50 marriage." The husband in this case was District Judge George A. Bartlett, of Reno, Nevada.

Hereditary Talent.

Miss Irene Curie, the talented 16-year-old daughter of Mme. Curie, the famous co-discoverer, with her late husband, of radium, is a Bachelor of Science, and is devoting her life to research work. She is her mother's right hand at the Paris Institute which bears the family name.

Mrs. Barton's Election.

Mrs. Eleanor Barton, J.P., of Sheffield, has been elected general secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild. She is well known in the Labour and Co-operative Movements, and twice fought the King's Norton Division of Birmingham as a Co-operative and Labour candidate. The membership of the Guild is 53,664.

Girl Clerk's Literary Success.

A London girl clerk, employed in the offices of a building society, has written a first novel which has proved an immediate success. She is Miss May Sutherland, authoress of "The Stony Trail." The publishers, Messrs. Hutchinson and Co., were so impressed by the book that they secured an option on Miss Sutherland's next three books.

Women Inventors.

Among many devices for which patents were taken out by women in 1925 were:—A tray for standing perambulators on so that rainwater may not drip off on to the floor; a device for mashing potatoes; a continuously acting candle-making machine; a device for fixing inside gas ovens which can be easily and quickly cleaned; a portable tent which requires no pole when in use; a scooter propelled by the weight of the body; and a device for automatically cutting off the gas when the flame is accidentally blown out. Women have also gone into business in buying and selling patents.

Women and Labour.

The success of Women's Week, organised by the Women's Sections of the Labour Women's Advisory Councils and Labour Parties last year, has led the Executive Committee of the Labour Party to ask for similar efforts in 1926. The dates proposed are June 12th to 20th. The purpose of Women's Week is to conduct during that period an intensive campaign for increasing the women's membership of the Party.

Baptist Woman President.

The Chinese Council of the Baptist Union has elected Miss Florence Wood a Vice-President of the Council for this year, and President for next. Miss Wood, who is a Stoke Newington woman, went out to China in 1908, and has been tackling the problem of illiteracy among the village women, to whom she has been teaching the phonetic script with great success. It is only three or four years since women were first allowed to attend the Council meetings of the Church.

Italian Queen Mother and Woman Suffrage.

When the National Council of Women met in Rome, in 1914, the late Queen Margherita received the members at her Palace, and she expressed the wish that "Italy would be the first great European power to give women the vote."

MORE WOMEN BARRISTERS.

Nineteen women were successful in the recent Hilary Bar Examinations.

In Roman Law, five women were successful: the Misses Mary Josephine Clark (Middle Temple), Sophy Sanger (Gray's Inn), and Dorothy Travers Wolfe (Lincoln's Inn), who obtained Second Classes, and the Misses Phyllis Lucy Morgan Blake (Gray's Inn) and Harriet Elizabeth Vaizey (Inner Temple).

In Constitutional Law and Legal History, seven women were successful: the Misses Mary Josephine Clark and Florence Earengay (Middle Temple), who obtained Second Classes, and the Misses Gwyneth Howell Evans (Inner Temple), Mary Anna Elizabeth Moclair (Lincoln's Inn), Catherine Allison Morrison (Inner Temple), Kathleen Marjorie Strettell (Gray's Inn), and Margaret MacLaren Weir (Middle Temple).

In Criminal Law and Procedure, five women were successful: the Misses Louise Beryl Gurdry and Betty Fox Slade (both of the Middle Temple), who obtained First Classes, the Misses Dorothy Alice North Lewis and Margery Kate Pearson Willison (both of the Inner Temple), who obtained Second Classes, and Miss Winifrede Botterell McConnell (Inner Temple).

In Real Property and Conveyancing, two women were successful: Miss Cynthia Nancy Rachel Gover (Middle Temple), who obtained a First Class, and the Hon. Ruth Burton Buckley (Lincoln's Inn), who obtained a Second Class.

In the Final Examination, two women were successful: the Misses Vera Beatrice Marjorie Meiklejohn (Middle Temple) and Catherine Allison Morrison.

This brings the total of fully fledged women barristers up to 73, whilst 91 other women are now studying for the Bar at the various Inns of Court.

IGNORANCE AND ARROGANCE.

It is curious how apparently ignorant otherwise well-informed men are of women's present position. Mr. A. G. Gardiner, writing in last Saturday's *Daily News* on Miss Maude Royden, seems to think that it is only in the Church that women are denied equal opportunities with men. He says:—"In the secular world the sex discrimination has entirely vanished. In the political, the social and the professional spheres alike, woman has established her right to a place in the sun beyond challenge. There is no career, no recreation, no freedom that man enjoys which woman does not enjoy in equal measure according to her capacity. She has not only won the vote but she sits in Parliament." Mr. Gardiner's spectacles are certainly rose-coloured, but women know that these sentences contain scarcely half-truths. Women are certainly working in the professions, and they are making good in them, but have they equal opportunities with men to secure the highest positions? Even in the medical profession many medical schools exclude women students, while the Government and local authorities still offer lower salaries to medical women than to men of the same qualifications for the few appointments open to women. In law, fewer women are competing with men, and no differentiation in fees to men and women has yet come to light, but does Mr. Gardiner believe that in our lifetime women lawyers will have equal opportunities with men to secure, say, the Lord Chancellorship? Women are very slowly gaining admittance to a few higher posts in the Home Civil Service; but in the Diplomatic Service, the Consular Service, and the Indian Civil Service all posts are reserved to men, while women teachers have neither similar opportunities nor equal pay with their men colleagues of the same status. Has he not heard that women have not the same freedom as men in regard to aviation? As to the Parliamentary vote, surely this writer must have heard that while practically any man over the age of twenty-one can qualify for a vote no woman under thirty years of age in this country, be she a university graduate, a professional, business or industrial worker, a mother, wife, or spinster, may claim this vote, and that even after thirty years of age, unless she possesses a husband, or the furniture in her room, she is not entitled to a vote, so that there are at the present time nearly four-and-three-quarter millions of voteless women over twenty-one

years of age, compared with only about 313,000 voteless men over twenty-one. He also forgets that professional women must immediately give up their careers on marriage if they happen to be employed by the Government, or by local governing authorities. No married man is expected to give up his career, even though he may marry a woman with sufficient means to keep him off the rates. We do not quite know what Mr. Gardiner means when he says that "woman has established her right to a place in the sun beyond challenge," but we have no hesitation in denying that she obtains that place.

While distinguished writers seem to think that women have won everything, so far as mundane affairs are concerned, there are still other men who would keep them out of matters which especially concern women. The Vicar of Teddington is one of them. Writing in his Parish magazine this month, the Vicar (the Rev. H. Williams) appeals for Queen's Nurses for the district, and then says:—"When the Queen's Nurses are established in Teddington I shall have a cheque for £50 ready to hand to the committee, most of whom, I hope, will be men, because I have found that in rescue and nursing associations men can manage the affairs dealing with women better than women. The fact is well known throughout the country to-day that the decay of rescue associations has been brought about by amateur women ordering, in foolish and sentimental ways, the trained professional rescue workers in their work in a way that men of business would not dream of doing. The men would undertake the getting-in of the money and the right distribution of it, but would not venture on matters they did not understand."

This insufferable arrogance on the part of the Vicar of Teddington makes us pause for breath. We do not know why he should mix up rescue and nursing associations; but surely he cannot expect any self-respecting woman to contribute a halfpenny to any scheme for nursing if men alone are to say how it shall be spent. Will he find any women nurses for the parish to act only under the orders of his committee of men? We hope not; they would probably be boycotted. To anyone who knows the conditions of the poor who so thankfully avail themselves of the services of the nurses in the district, the Vicar's proposal appears to be as monstrous as it is arrogant.

AN AUSTRIAN WOMAN ECONOMIST.

Frau Freundlich, M.P., of Austria, President of the International Co-operative Women's Guild, has been appointed a member of the preparatory Commission set up to make arrangements for the International Economic Conference which is to be convened by the League of Nations.

No one better qualified than Frau Freundlich to represent the woman's point of view on economic problems—which is essentially that of the consumer—could have been chosen, for she has probably a unique record among women for administrative work in such questions. For many years she has been a director of the Austrian Co-operative Wholesale Society, whose enterprise and success in meeting some of the country's difficulties after the war gained wide recognition. During the war, Frau Freundlich was also a director of the ministry of food, and, in addition, her experience as a Member of Parliament, and still more as a member of the very progressive Vienna City Council, has brought her in practical touch with every aspect of economic organisation.

Like the rest of the Committee, which consists entirely of experts, Frau Freundlich will sit in a personal, not a representative capacity; but her appointment is no doubt due to her position in the International Co-operative Women's Guild, as well as to her own exceptional qualifications.

WHY RAILWAY CARRIAGES SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR WOMEN.

The following is taken from the *Northern Daily Telegraph*, January 8th:—

"A scene in a railway compartment was described at the Blackpool Police Court to-day, when a youth, aged 19, of Lytham Road, South Shore, was summoned for molesting railway passengers and for assaulting a girl, aged 19, also of South Shore.

"Mr. Daniels, for the railway company, said the girl entered an empty compartment at St. Anne's, but as she was closing the door the accused opened it, and followed her. He sat facing her, and after making a remark about the weather, pushed her over. She struggled with him, struck him several blows in the face, screamed, and attempted to pull the communication cord. At the Burlington Road halt, the accused looked out of the window, and said, 'I think I will get out here.' He remained, however, and then said: 'The usual thing to do is to carry a rope so that I could tie you up, and put you under the seat.' On the train's arrival at Waterloo Road Station, the accused remarked to the girl: 'Let's shake hands,' and grasped her hand. The young man, in evidence, said he tried to kiss complainant, who resented it and pushed him away. He was a public schoolboy, and expected to sail for New Zealand under the public schools farming scheme.

"The accused was fined £3, and ordered to pay witnesses' expenses, £6 5s. in all."

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 15th, 1926.

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

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.

THE 25-YEAR-OLD RED HERRINGS.

Local Parliaments have their uses. We are told that at one time some of the most brilliant men in the House of Commons had received their training at such local institutions. We have before us the Order of the Day for yesterday's meeting of one of these local parliaments. We are rather suspicious of the inspired ingenuity of the following Resolution which is to be moved by a member representing a London suburb, but we hope that he will find uncompromising opposition from all those men and women members who have a sincere belief in democracy. The Resolution is as follows:—

"The Parliamentary Franchise shall accrue to persons of either sex at the age of 25 provided that he or she shall (a) possess property upon which income tax is payable; (b) be in receipt of income from trade or profession on which income tax is payable; (c) be in receipt of salary or wage on which income tax is payable; (d) have served, or be serving, in any of the defensive forces of the nation; (e) be the wife of any qualified persons under sections (a), (b), (c), (d).
"Provided always that nothing in this Resolution shall interfere with the full enjoyment of the franchise of those who have previously exercised it during the preceding five years."

Women certainly do not want to exchange one fancy franchise for another. At present a woman must be over 30 years of age before she can claim a Parliamentary vote, whereas any man can claim it at twenty-one; and even when she is over 30 she cannot get this vote unless she owns a husband, or the furniture in her dwelling room. Under the Resolution to be submitted to this local parliament a woman would have to prove that she paid income tax, or that she had a husband who paid income tax, or who had served in the defensive forces of the nation! Such an arrangement would exclude from the franchise the great mass of working women in the country, unless the Government of the country decided to charge an income tax on the lowest of wages. We think we could rely upon working men to defeat such a proposal from the point of view of the way in which such a franchise would affect men. So far as the Women's Freedom League is concerned, our demand is that the Parliamentary vote shall be given to women at the same age and on the same term as it is given to men. We ask for nothing more, and we shall certainly not be satisfied with anything less. We want equality in our franchise laws NOW: both as regards age and a simple residential qualification. Whatever the terms on which men have had the vote in this country, they could always claim it at the age of twenty-one; and if women had not been demanding the vote we should not have heard of any suggested alteration in this age. Women have had quite enough of the 30-year-old fancy franchise which men, after a Speaker's Conference, imposed upon them. They now demand that this and all other special restrictions for women in regard to our franchise laws shall be abolished, and that they shall have the Parliamentary vote at the same age and on the same terms as men now have it. All these unpractical suggestions are just red herrings.

THE GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS.

Last week a case came before the Marylebone Police Court concerning the custody of a little girl, aged five. The mother was summoned by her husband, who claimed the return of their daughter, in accordance with a mutual arrangement come to in September, 1922, on the ground that he had a good home for her with a foster-mother, who was very fond of her, whereas it was stated that the mother was living under doubtful conditions in one room, and had previously neglected the child. When brought into Court this child was handed to the foster-mother but immediately began to cry, continued to cry, and struggled to get away, despite the woman's kisses and embraces. When the magistrate directed that the little girl should be released so that she might go to her mother, she immediately ran towards her and happily remained with her. Referring to this test, in giving his decision under the new Guardianship of Infants Act, the magistrate said that the real question he had to consider was not the interests of the parents, but the welfare of the child. He had not a word to say against the foster-mother, but it was obvious from what had taken place in Court that she was the last person to whom the child wanted to go. He was not satisfied that it was for the welfare of the child to be separated from its mother, and he would, though with some hesitation, dismiss the summons.

This matter seems to us perfectly clear, and the decision quite in accordance with the new Act, so that we cannot understand why, in alluding to this Act, the magistrate who decided the case said that it was an instance of the fresh difficulties which the legislature had put upon magistrates in calling upon them to decide matters which were formerly dealt with by the Chancery Division of the High Court; and that the onus put upon magistrates was terrible! The Act states clearly that such a case, when brought into Court is to be decided from the point of view of the welfare of the child; and as this magistrate seemed to have no hesitation in deciding what was the welfare of this particular child, he could only decide the matter in one way. We do not think that a woman magistrate would have experienced the slightest difficulty in deciding a similar case.

MOTHERS AND RECREATION.

Dr. J. Reaney, of the Furzedown Training College, London, when speaking on "The Psychology of Play and the Need for Playing Fields" at the concluding session of the winter school of the Women Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors Association, at Bedford College, last Tuesday, said that the ordinary married woman who is a mother is the hardest-worked person in the country, and that she needs play as much as anyone else. We are glad to note that this last remark was greeted with applause. It is a truism that a woman's work in the home is never done. When a man returns home after his day's work—sometimes an eight-hour one, sometimes less, and once a week only perhaps two or three hours—he does not expect to be called upon to do anything more. Would it not make an enormous difference to the lives of many thousands of married women if, say, during the week-end, they could count upon having at least half a day off, the husband arranging in that interval to look after the necessary arrangements in the house as well as the children? The mother could then arrange to spend the time with friends, go to a theatre or a cinema, or possibly play tennis, or some other outdoor game, if she felt inclined to do so. The important thing is that she should not be obliged to have the children with her, for they are part of her everyday work, and recreation should have no connection with one's work.

IMPERIAL CONFERENCES AND WOMEN.

By M. CHAVE COLLISSON.

There are rumours of an Imperial Conference in the early autumn, and organised women must take stock on this account as on so many others. Let us first make it clear that we understand perfectly the constitution of an Imperial Conference. The chosen leaders of each unit of the British Commonwealth meet to discuss policy which affects these units in their relationship to each other, and in their relationship as a great whole facing other political groupings. Chosen leaders represent great electorates, and no thoughtful person demands that the principles of constitutional government should be overruled to allow for the special representation of a sex as such.

But the first fact we have to face is that so long as the chosen representatives are selected by a limited instead of a full electorate, they are not truly representative. This is the case in the central country of the Commonwealth, and it is the case in South Africa. The leaders here represent only a limited electorate, and there is just cause for grievance in that, when world policy is in question, policy which may decide for peace or war, the thoughtful, intelligent woman electorate is still, in the one case partly, in the other wholly, ignored. Agreed that it is for the countries concerned to decide the limits of their own franchise, and that the Imperial Conference cannot interfere. But do not let us think of such a Conference as truly representative. And there is one point which may justly be raised in this connection.

We find in the official summary report of the 1923 Conference that "an important section of the Conference discussions was taken up with discussions on the status of Indians in different parts of the Empire." Quite as it should be. But do we find any discussion of the status of women in the different parts of the Empire? The Indians were agitating for citizen and franchise rights. So are the women. The one problem does not appear to be more local than the other. A woman who has enjoyed franchise rights in one part of the Commonwealth, and has learned to exercise her citizen sense in this direction, is deprived of these rights and this opportunity if she goes to another part of the Commonwealth. She remains the same person, but she has not the same rights. This is not the way to encourage citizen teaching at the source, in the home, where mother lore takes root. Is not this an anomaly which ought to be discussed at an Imperial Conference?

Then there is the issue of the assessors and experts

who accompany the chosen representatives. Suppose the issue of migration to be under discussion, and surely no Imperial Conference can afford to ignore it, there are women well trained and expert in migration problems. Shall we see them called upon to help in the elucidation of this or any other problem which definitely needs their aid?

An ever-recurring problem is that of the nationality of the married woman. The opinion of the 1923 Conference was "that the principle of the existing law that the nationality of a married woman depends on that of her husband should be maintained." The Committee, however, recommended "that power shall be taken to readmit to British nationality in cases where the married state, though subsisting in law, has to all practical purposes come to an end." Stately language. Let us ask ourselves quite simply, are we, or are we not, chattels? Who can still, in the twentieth century, think women as a sex so bereft of all deep feeling for country, and all that country means, as to believe that calmly, by the act of marriage, the whole of that deep feeling, that just and honourable witness to a true conception of citizenship, is wiped out? And if it remains, surely the woman herself must be the person to decide whether she will do violence to it for a valid reason?

There are other very practical issues, in these days of passports, Bolshevik scares, and regulations against aliens. An Australian, who votes at the age of twenty-one, may find herself excluded, except by special permit, from the country of her birth. She may find herself unable to visit that country *except with her husband's permission*, and, if she marries an American, it will only be through him, by a special kind of permit, that she can travel at all.

We ask every thoughtful woman, and every man who cares for justice, to reflect on these matters. There are other big problems for Imperial Conferences, but attention to these will remove real grievances, which hinder, as all truly founded grievances do, the full usefulness of the work that might be done by contented citizens. We urge every woman's organisation to consider means of approaching the Premier of their own country, and of pressing upon him a serious mandate for the discussion—the temperate, honest, unprejudiced discussion—of these problems. We ask that the evidence of intelligent women be called in, and we suggest that linking up with the British Commonwealth League will help in concerted effort.

A BENEFACTOR TO WOMEN.

By L. F. RAMSEY.

A centenary that every woman ought to remember this year, on May 28th, is that of the Rt. Hon. George Osborne Morgan, who was born in 1826, at Gothenburg, Sweden. To him is due the passing of the Married Women's Property Act, which became law in August, 1882.

An earlier Act of 1870 secured a wife's personal earnings to her own use, and enabled her to dispose of property bequeathed to her, but the position of a woman unhappily married was a terrible one, and even to a happily married woman, if she was at all independent by nature, the state of things was galling in the extreme. Marriage vested all the wife's personal property in her husband, and gave him the right to the rents and profits of her freehold property. Her leasehold property became his, and he could dispose of it, if he chose. She could not sign a cheque, or enter into any contract, for the law said: "The husband is the head of the wife, and all that she has belongs to him."

Not only so, but the husband could appoint a trustee, who, at his death, would have absolute

control over the wife's property, as if she were a child. In the case of an ancestor of mine, who died in 1850, a well-to-do man of property, he left his estate vested in a trustee, who refused the widow all information as to her position and income, doling it out to her as if it were a charity.

When the trustee died suddenly, the widow found herself penniless, for her estate had not been kept separate from his own, and there was no means of proving a claim to anything under the law as it then existed.

A friend of my mother's, a young heiress, fell a victim to a fortune-hunter, for there were many young men, prior to the passing of this Act, who found a rich wife an easy way out of their difficulties, only to find that after marriage she had no control whatever over her money, which her husband dissipated as fast as possible. Having three little children, she pleaded with him to amend his ways in order that they might be brought up in a manner suitable to their position in life, but he only mocked her.

FRIDAY,
JAN. 15.
1926.

THE VOTE

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, January 17th. 3.30 p.m. Music. Lecture. Miss Margery Fry, J.P. 6.30 p.m. Miss Maude Royden: "Christ or the Bible."

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