

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XVIII. No. 519.

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

FRIDAY, OCT. 3, 1919.

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

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

EASTERN WOMEN AND THE VOTE.

Herabai A. Tata.

UNMARRIED W.A.A.C. AND W.R.A.F. MOTHERS.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE STRIKE!

THE COLOUR BAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. Margaret Hodge.

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE IN PRISON LIFE.

Arthur St. John.

EASTERN WOMEN AND THE VOTE.

A Plea from India.

The Southborough Franchise Committee appointed last year to inquire into the franchise proposals for the Indian Reform Bill now before Parliament, has dismissed all claim of Indian women to share with men in the benefits of responsible government.

The Empire is built on the lives of men as well as on the lives of women, but with what justice and truth can it be said that the extension of the suffrage is on a democratic basis in India, when the whole of her womenfolk are excluded from the Reform Scheme without valid reasons? To deny the right to vote to Indian women is unjust and unfair on the principles of justice, equality and freedom for all, since all the arguments in support of the extension of the franchise to men are equally good and applicable in the case of women. Great injury is unquestionably being done to the

Rights of Indian Women.

by excluding them from political rights, as if they had no sense of responsibility in the right conduct of national affairs, and this not only denies them equal opportunity of development, but is a loss to the whole Indian nation.

The question of women's suffrage has attracted considerable public attention, and women ask themselves why they are excluded from the vote. There was no opposition from the whole of India, and much practical sympathy was shown by the men of the country to this question. All the Indian deputations of men which have come over to Great Britain to plead for India have,

without exception, urged the extension of the franchise to Indian women on the same basis as to men.

Indian women are strongly of opinion that their sex should not be a disqualification, and earnestly demand that they should be put on an equal status with men. The Committee admitted the principle of equality and justice for the enfranchisement of women, but thought that for its practical adoption the time had not yet come. But how can Indian women be called "unfit" when the opportunity to exercise their votes and to show their capacities is not given to them?

We do not demand the vote for each and every woman, but properly qualified women deserve to be enfranchised. The adoption of women's franchise would be an encouragement to bring forward many desired reforms, to quicken intelligence, and to deepen in women a sense of responsibility and citizenship with men, as has been proved to be the case in other countries. It can not be called "premature," as Indian women are awake to their claims; they have shown much capability for work in the past; their education is increasing day by day, and the desire to fit themselves for the higher opportunities of life grows with them. There are to-day in the Empire of India more than

A Thousand Indian Women Graduates.

and hundreds more who possess wide general knowledge and culture, all of whom are as fully deserving of the suffrage as any man.

In Bombay, where women have the municipal vote, there is no opposition to extending the franchise to women. Women have got the municipal vote in many other parts of India. To become an elector great learning is not required, but common-sense and judgment. Indian women possess both. The argument brought forward that Indian women do not desire their own enfranchisement is not true, as there has been great enthusiasm amongst women on this point in many parts of India. This is proved by the resolutions passed in the provincial conferences and the Indian National Congress, held in many parts of India. Indian women do desire to safeguard their interests, and to get civic liberty such as the vote gives them. The removal of their disqualification will not only give voting rights to women who are independent, and rate and tax-payers, but it will remove the stigma of inferiority and unfitness from Indian women generally. If men dwell so strongly on the franchise, because it includes all other rights and is the one essential thing, truly the same thing applies to women equally. Putting off this question to a future date will be a source of dispute between men and women, and will prevent the smooth working of the Reform Scheme. An illiterate man giving a tax of a few rupees will have the vote, while a woman, however well educated she may be, paying hundreds of rupees in taxes, is to be excluded.

HERABAI A. TATA.

Representative of Bombay Women and the 43 branches of the Women's Indian Association for Women's Franchise Work.

Unmarried W.A.A.C. and W.R.A.F. Mothers.

At last week's meeting of the Hampstead Board of Guardians Mrs. Nevinson moved: "that, owing to the number of girls (six since July) belonging to the military services—W.A.A.C.'s and W.R.A.F.'s—who have recently become chargeable to the parish of Hampstead for confinement, none of whom belong to the parish, the War Office be asked to provide lying-in accommodation for those young women, and that the question ought to be a national and not a parochial one." She said that the girls should not come under the Poor Law, and that soldiers felt very strongly on the matter. They considered such a procedure was a disgrace to the King's uniform. Apart from that the charge should be on the Army authorities.

Miss Brooke-Herford seconded, and remarked that the men, too, had disgraced the King's uniform.

Mrs. Nevinson agreed, but pointed out that for doing so they had not been sent to the workhouse.

The resolution was carried by nine votes to two.

Mrs. Nevinson then moved: "That owing to the lack of homes for children and the dearth of foster-mothers, the Ministry of Health be asked that the law be temporarily relaxed so that unmarried mothers may be permitted to leave their babies in the Poor Law institutions on payment of a reasonable sum, pending better arrangements for the upbringing of these unwanted children."

In support of her motion, Mrs. Nevinson dealt with all sides of the subject. Economy would be effected, she insisted, because if the girls were allowed to leave their babies in the care of the Poor Law they would not only be able to provide for themselves, but would also be able to pay for the keep of their babies.

Many of these girls, she continued, were domestic servants, and to allow them their liberty would be of distinct advantage to boarding-house keepers and other employers.

To keep in the workhouse a girl who was unable to make provision for her baby outside was, she said, bad for all concerned, and oftentimes drove girls in their desperation to desert their babies, and even to murder them.

Miss Brooke Herford, although in sympathy with the recommendation, considered that all women should not be included, for some, though not coming under the category of feeble-minded, needed protection against themselves. She moved to amend by inserting the clause, "With the discretion of the Guardians."

Miss Finlay seconded the amendment.

Councillor E. S. Payne had no liking for the amendment, and pointed out that the Board very often used this discretion and allowed girls with babies to seek employment.

In doing so, the Guardians were evading the law, and he thought that the amendment would do more harm than good, inasmuch as it would direct attention to that evasion.

Miss Brooke Herford then withdrew her amendment, and Mrs. Nevinson's motion was put, but as four voted in its favour and four against, it was declared not carried.

Miss O'Sullivan Cleared.

Vindicated by the Air Council Itself.

The report of the Court of Inquiry ordered by the Air Council into allegations of financial corruption brought forward by Miss Eileen O'Sullivan, assistant commandant and clothing controller of the W.R.A.F., a lieutenant of Miss Douglas Pennant, was published on September 24th.

The inquiry was instituted, as previously mentioned in THE VOTE, after unfavourable comments made by Sir Frederick Banbury's Economy Committee.

The court consisted of a major, two colonels, an assistant commandant of the W.R.A.F., and the brigadier-general presiding.

The court declared that Miss O'Sullivan "did her best in circumstances of considerable difficulty." She was "not inefficient, but was not easy to get on with, was impatient of control, and entertained an exaggerated idea of the importance of her position."

That is to say, being a conscientious woman put into a responsible position, she was perfectly determined that no one should stop her from doing her job to the very best of her ability, regardless of obstruction from unauthorised persons. It is easy to see that much unnecessary difficulty was put in her way in carrying out the duties with which she had been entrusted.

The time is now past when men may expect to find responsible women

"Easy to get on with"

whilst obstacles are put in their path by persons whose business it is to back them up in the discharge of their proper duties.

The court found that there was acute friction between Miss O'Sullivan and Colonel Gadsby, the officer commanding at Feltham. This gentleman receives blame and censure for taking it upon himself to prevent her from carrying out her written orders. The court found Miss O'Sullivan justified in feeling that she had not been properly treated or properly supported in carrying out her duties as clothing controller. Most of the allegations made are considered by the official court to be unfounded, and the clothing contractors are exonerated from all charges of dishonesty or dishonesty and of having offered a bribe of one raincoat and one hundred mackintoshes.

It will be remembered that Sir F. Banbury's House of Commons Committee came to the opposite decision, so the court calmly remarks that this committee blundered through insufficient evidence. It seems a great pity that the Air Council was so remiss as not to furnish the committee with necessary facts at the time.

In this conflict of opinions an independent public inquiry is badly needed.

We remind our readers that the House of Lords Committee inquiry into Miss Douglas Pennant's case opens on October 14th, and it is at the House of Lords, and is open to the public.

E. KNIGHT.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A Famous Diva.

In spite of her advancing years, the death of Adelina Patti came as a melancholy surprise to most people. She seems to have been a famous songstress from her very earliest years, for the story goes that at the tender age of seven she stood upon the table and gave her family the benefit of "Casta Diva," as sung by the great Amalia. Before she had finished her father and mother were openly weeping, and the rest of the family wiping away furtive tears. A few weeks later this infant prodigy made her first appearance in public at a concert in New York. Her success was extraordinary. The family debts were quickly paid off and the next five or six years formed an era of great prosperity, which attended her in increasing measure all through her life. Nevertheless, Madame Patti had little or no instruction in the art of singing. That, like her marvellous voice, was born "within." It is estimated that she earned over one million by her art.

A Liverywoman.

London's Lady Mayoress (Lady Marshall) was admitted last week as the first woman member of the Guild of the Spectacle Makers' Company. The Clerk read the quaint declarations of Freedom and Livery, which the Lord Mayor witnessed and the Lady Mayoress signed. She was next "clothed" with the fur-trimmed robe of a liveryman. Sir Marcus Samuel, who was present, said that it was in the spirit of the time that women of ability and influence were taking upon themselves the duties of citizenship. Among the City Guilds there was much good work which women might do.

The Ministry of Women.

One of the topics which will be much to the fore at the coming Church Congress at Leicester will be the Ministry of Women, to be discussed by Miss Eleanor Gregory, while a simultaneous public meeting of the League of the Church Militant will be expounding the same question, the speakers being Miss Maude Royden and Rev. C. W. Weston. Mrs. Barnett, Dr. Letitia Fairfield, and Miss Higson will address the Congress on the subject of Christian ideals of citizenship and service.

"The Woman Teacher."

We welcome the first number of "The Woman Teacher," the organ of the National Federation of Women Teachers, the editor of which is our old member, Miss Emily Phipps, B.A., whose parliamentary candidature in Chelsea at the last General Election will be well remembered by our readers. We can depend upon this periodical to put up a gallant fight on behalf of Equal Pay for Equal Work for men and Women Teachers, and we wish our sister organisation every success in this new undertaking.

"United India."

The United India Co., Ltd., 1, Robert St., Adelphi, has published the first number of an excellent little paper under the above title. The contributors include Mrs. Annie Besant, Col. Wedgwood, M.P., Edward Carpenter, H. N. Nevinson, George Lansbury, and several well-known Indian gentlemen, Sir Sankaran Kaiv, Kt., the Hon. Mr. Surendranath Bannerji, &c.

Women and Housing.

Representatives of women's organisations are to be granted facilities by Nottingham Housing Committee to inspect plans for municipal houses before their final adoption.

The "Kitchen Aid."

Under the above title a remarkable labour-saving device was recently on show in the Confectioners' and Bakers' Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall. Among the various things it purposes to accomplish are the mixing of cakes and puddings, whipping of eggs, mashing potatoes, grinding coffee, slicing vegetables, peeling, potatoes, making sausages and rissoles and also ices! The machine is driven by a motor, which can be easily attached to an electric light plug. Unfortunately, its price (£30) is prohibitive for all but rich households.

A Woman Flight Pilot.

The first lady to undergo a course of training for a flying pilot's ticket since the end of the war is Mrs. Atkey, of Chelsea, who is learning to fly an Avro at Hounslow, and made her first instructional flight a day or two ago. Mrs. Atkey's instructor is Mr. Park, the well-known Avro pilot, who says that he finds that she learns just as readily and displays quite as much nerve as a man.

Morals in India.

Miss Katherine Dixon, a representative of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, has recently returned from the East, where she has been successful in closing the tolerated houses of India that were reserved for British troops. She is now holding meetings in this country dealing with the subject of British administration in the East, and especially pleading for a high and equal moral standard. When in India she addressed no fewer than 17,000 soldiers with encouraging results, and is particularly anxious to get the advice and help of men audiences in this country.

Woman Delegate from Norway.

The first woman delegate to be appointed to the League of Nations Assembly is Frue Betzy Kjikberg, a Norwegian. It will be remembered the women in Norway gained a limited vote as early as 1907, and became fully enfranchised in 1913. Italy, only so recently enfranchised herself, is also contemplating sending a woman delegate to the Assembly.

Women Candidates in Ontario.

A general election is expected in Ontario within the next two months, and, an Act having been passed during last session entitling women to take seats in the Provincial Legislature, there are for the first time several women candidates.

QUEEN'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE, W.
(Sole Lessors ... Messrs. CHAPPELL & Co., Ltd.)

FOUR LECTURES

BY
MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

SUBJECT:

THE WAR AND THE FUTURE

On SUNDAY MORNINGS, at 11.30.

- October 5th. The War and the Builders of the Commonwealth.
- October 12th. The War and its Lessons on Fraternity.
- October 19th. The War and its Lessons on Equality.
- October 26th. The War and its Lessons on Liberty.

Seats, numbered and reserved, 7s. 6d., 6s., 5s. 6d. Admission 1s. 6d., and a few free seats.

Applications for tickets (accompanied by stamped square envelope), should be either to The Theosophical Publishing House, 1, Upper Woburn Place, W.C.; 169, Piccadilly, W.; The Order of the Star in the East, 314, Regent Street, W.; or at the door of the Hall.

THE VOTE.

Proprietors: THE MINERVA PUBLISHING, CO., LTD.
Offices:—144, High Holborn, W.C.1.
FRIDAY, October 3rd, 1919.

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

Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.

Telegrams: "DÉSPARD, Museum 1429, London."

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATE.

At Home and Abroad ... post free, 6/6 per annum.

THE STRIKE.

The Government has signed peace abroad; but, in spite of all its fine talk about reconstruction during the last five years, and the Prime Minister's visions of a new world and the scrapping of bad old conditions, this Government is evidently quite unable to maintain peace at home. We are conscious that the country is seething with unrest, and we are acutely aware of the entire disorganisation of our national life; but we, as part of the public, are kept in the dark as to the real cause of the present dispute, for the Press seems to tell a different story every day. Why is not Parliament summoned to deal with this grave issue? Then at least we should hear as much truth as both sides could tell; whereas now there is an ever-growing uneasiness throughout the country that its interests are at the mercy of the bungles, blunders and misunderstandings of Government officials and an executive committee of a section of the community, who apparently can come to no agreement, and whose deliberations are carried on in secret. Why did we take the trouble to vote for members of Parliament if they cannot curtail their holiday and come to Westminster to deal with the present national crisis? Their absence is bringing our representative system into disrepute. In our opinion it is the clear duty of members of Parliament to shoulder their responsibility; and if they cannot assist the Government in extricating the nation from the present impasse, they should insist on an appeal being made to the country to return a Government more competent to deal with its affairs.

Most people agree that everything that is humanly possible should be done to prevent future devastating wars; and for this purpose enthusiastically support the firm establishment of a League of Nations as the most powerful instrument in maintaining the peace of the world. Is it not possible to have a League of Citizens of this nation, the executive of which should be empowered to investigate cases of dispute and to arbitrate between them? It is monstrous that a dispute between two nations should involve the whole world in bloodshed and terror; it is equally monstrous that a misunderstanding or dispute between two sections of the community (even though one of these sections be the Government itself) should lead us all in the direction of national disaster. It should be the aim of the best citizens of this country to prevent strikes in the future. It remained for the greatest war in history to call into being a League of Nations; is it possible that the present strike may lead to the establishment of a league of the citizens of this nation competent to understand and deal with the interests of every section of the community, and to adjust all causes of dispute between them?

WOMEN'S POLICE SERVICE.

The Women's Police Service, under Miss Damer Dawson, was largely used by the Government during the war for most dangerous and responsible work—the policing of munitions areas where women were employed. Some of the largest and most important were under their surveillance, and there does not appear to have been the least whisper of dissatisfaction at their work. In London, however, Sir Edward Henry would not recognise or employ in any way the Women's Police Service. He took on a hundred women, mainly volunteers for war work, of the women patrols organised by the National Union of Women Workers, to protect girls in the vicinity of camps and barracks, and try to mitigate the uglier effects of war disorganisation in regard to these girls. They were a sort of *police de mœurs* without any of the power of police, and only worked with and in sight of one of the male police. This is the corps Sir Neville Macready has recently patronised.

There are about 100 women agents employed. Many of the more experienced, being volunteers, have given up the work since the war ended, and their places are filled with new recruits. A sop has been thrown to the Women's Police Service in the offer to accept suitable women who have been trained in that corps. It is obvious, however, that women who have actually been constables, sworn in and vested with full authority as such, are not going to enter this hybrid service and "train" as if they were raw and inexperienced beginners, to do less responsible work than they previously did. So the recruits obtained from the Women's Police Service are, in consequence, the least satisfactory members of that corps; and not one of their experienced officials has been offered a post in authority, or been taken on to train and shape the new corps.

It is to be hoped that a definite demand will go up from organised women for the recognition of the corps that did the original work, and for the proper appointment of one of these trained and expert women as Assistant Commissioner, so that she may be in a position to secure the status of constable for the women recruited, to watch that they have equal opportunities for promotion, and to see to it that they are not degraded into mere agents for the dirty work of the community.

MEN, WOMEN AND THE LAW.

We have still received no definite reply from the Home Secretary to our request that he should receive a deputation from the Women's Freedom League to put before him reasons for the immediate release of Elsie Kathleen Smith, the W.R.A.F. clerk who is now serving four months' imprisonment in the second division in Holloway Gaol for having, when weak and ill, "attempted to smother" her seven-days-old baby. The only message the Home Office can give us over the 'phone is that the Home Secretary is exceedingly busy with the industrial difficulties at the present time, but that our request will be considered later! Meanwhile, we have to confess that the sayings and judgments of men magistrates are altogether beyond our understanding. Last week a man was charged with stabbing his wife in the neck with a penknife during a quarrel over money matters. He was remanded for a fortnight on bail, the magistrate advising the couple to make a fresh start and telling the wife "to try to be kind to him!" on the plea that the man had been in the Army, had been gassed, and wanted nursing up a bit! We are told that comparisons are odious; but we would point out that Elsie Smith had also been in the Army. She had been deserted by a Canadian officer, and after months of mental torture, when admittedly weak and ill, "attempted to smother" her (and his) baby. In our opinion she also wanted "nursing up a bit," but the judge in her case did not recommend this treatment. He sentenced her to four months' imprisonment.

THE COLOUR BAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Native Injustices.

At a meeting held on Friday, September 26th, at the offices of the British Dominions' Women Citizens' Union (19, Buckingham Street, Strand), Mr. Plaatge and Mr. Gumede, two of the South African delegates, addressed an interested audience upon the subject of the laws, recently passed in the Union of South Africa, which bore so hardly upon the coloured races.

Miss Ruth Atkinson, member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of New Zealand, occupied the chair, and introduced Mr. Plaatge to the expectant audience.

Mr. Plaatge said this was the first purely women's meeting that he had addressed since he landed in July. Very different conditions prevailed in South Africa from those in the other oversea dominions of Great Britain, and very few people in these Islands realised this. The Africans in the Union were once free and influential, whereas in Jamaica, where they are now politically emancipated, they were formerly slaves. The British had persistently advocated freedom for men of colour, and one of the reasons for which they fought the Dutch was to liberate the natives of South Africa from an irksome oppression.

A serious mistake in the Constitution had been the

Introduction of the Colour Bar.

True the right to vote was not taken from the coloured men of Cape Province, but they were not allowed to elect a member from their own people. With no direct representation in Parliament they were heavily taxed. The only occasion on which the Government of South Africa troubled itself about a coloured man was when, once a year, it enforced his annual payment of taxes.

Mr. Schreiner brought over a deputation to plead for the rights of the natives, but, although the deputation obtained promises of help, if they would trust British statesmen, their disabilities were only increased by the Union Parliament. A law was passed that no coloured people should be members of the Dutch Church. Another prohibited them from entering a skilled trade, and yet a third forbade them to work on the land, except as servants of the white man. This last law was the cruellest of all, for agricultural and pastoral industries had occupied the natives for many generations. In 1914 a deputation, sent to protest against this law, consented to postpone their claims until the end of the war. Yet in spite of the

Loyalty and Good Faith

which actuated their sacrifice, the law, which should at least have been suspended, was drastically enforced. Poor widows whose husbands were killed fighting for the British in East Africa and in France, were sent to prison for keeping their own cows, and their release was only secured with difficulty.

Taxation was heavy, and there were special native taxes to provide schools for white children, schools from which coloured children were excluded. If a coloured man wanted to travel to another place in search of work every hindrance was put in his way. It was illegal for him to travel without a permit, which was almost impossible to procure. He was not allowed to travel in any but a Kaffir car, and some of the trains did not have these carriages. He must never enter a carriage containing white people, or a tram labelled "White." He might not even stand on a platform with men of a whiter skin. These were some of the many disabilities under which coloured people suffered.

Mr. Gumede said the Boer farmer (Boer farmer) dominated the country; he was ignorant and prejudiced, yet he had the vote. The natives had no voice, for if any member dared to speak for them in Parliament he did it at his own peril, and would never be re-elected. At the formation of the Union of South Africa the Boers

gained a victory over the British Constitution, for the colour bar was in direct contradiction to the principles which Great Britain had advocated for nearly a century.

People in this country were not alive to the fact that actual slavery was going on in the Orange Free State, and was practised under the British flag. Children in that district had to leave the mission school and get to work at sixteen, whatever the wishes of their parents. All the best land was reserved for Europeans. Although the natives had a right to a share in it, they were referred to the Land Board, and were allowed no cultivable land, only rocks, marsh and desert. The native had been submissive and loyal. Nearly twenty-six thousand came across the seas to fight Britain's battles.

Miss Richmond, of New Zealand, said she could not understand why the colour bar should be necessary in South Africa, for the Maoris were treated on a

Perfect equality with the White People.

and held high and responsible positions in the Dominion Government. She felt most keenly that it behoved all the members of the British Dominions' Women Citizens' Union to help Mr. Plaatge and his fellow-deputies in every way and to appeal to the conscience of the British people.

Miss Maude Royden asked if the treatment of the natives was better in Portuguese than in British South Africa, as the lecturer had spoken of natives under British rule emigrating to that colony. Mr. Plaatge replied that the land laws were less oppressive.

Mrs. Saul Solomon called the attention of the lecturers to the dangers that would result from the system of passes for natives, and pointed out the possible abuses of the power of granting or withholding these, especially in the case of women applicants. Mr. Plaatge said that married and single women had to pay a shilling a month for passes to their work, when their total weekly wage was only eight. Naturally, when so much power was in the hands of lower officials, it was liable to terrible abuse.

MARGARET HODGE.

INDIAN WOMEN AND THE FRANCHISE.

At a Conference on India called by the Britain and India Association, to be held at the Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour Street, W., to-morrow (Saturday), we are pleased to see that the following is among the three resolutions on the Agenda paper:—

"This Conference requests the Secretary of State for India to remove the disqualification imposed by the Reform Bill on women, in common with lunatics and criminals, as regards the franchise, and trusts that the Parliament, which only enfranchised British women after forty years of bitter struggle, leading to imprisonment and torture of many noble women, will not introduce this new cause of unrest and disturbance in India."

We sincerely hope that this resolution will be carried unanimously. To those of our readers who are interested in the position of Eastern women we extend a cordial invitation to attend the Public Meeting we have arranged Monday evening, Oct. 13th, in the Minerva Cafe at this address, when Mr. Maung Pu, B.A., Barrister-at-Law (President of the Burma Reform League), who has come to England to advocate the inclusion of Burma in the scheme of Indian Reform, will speak on "The Position of Women in Burma."

The Chair will be taken at 7 o'clock.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FRANCHISE CLUB,
9, Grafton Street, Piccadilly, W.1.—Subscription: London Members £2 2s., Country Members £1 5s. (Irish, Scottish, and Foreign members 10s. 6d.) per annum. Entrance fee, one guinea. Excellent Catering; Luncheons and Dinners à la Carte. All particulars, Secretary. Tel.: Mayfair 3932.

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE IN PRISON LIFE.

Human beings versus official machines.

The prison world, like the world of diplomacy, is walled round by official secrecy, and it comes as a surprise now and then to find that some few people are really trying to be human beings in a quiet way. Even then probably those who are striving hardest to introduce human relationships into prison affairs will be those who are most sensible of the limitations prescribed by officialdom and its "system."

Sarah Martin and Elizabeth Fry really seem for a time to have brought "women's influence" to bear upon the inside of prisons. No doubt that influence still persists and is traceable even to-day in some degree. But it has been much covered over with official routine and the deadening influence of false ideas.

During this century we have again had instances of women's influence in prison, through the imprisonment of a number of non-criminal women. These seem to have exerted a small but decided influence in the direction of penal reform, a noticeable change being that

The Silence Rule

no longer obtains, at any rate in Holloway Prison.

This is a decided gain; but the *prison system* still persists, the result of fundamental error working through officials. The same error is seen outside prisons. The prison system is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of our social and political arrangements, and is all in *keeping* with our barrack schools, our barrack factories, our military barracks, and our miles of dull streets and slums.

We want "women's influence" in all these various directions—our education, our political and social life—evoking *men's* influence, human influence, determined on developing and sharing more life all round, and establishing conditions in which our awful prisons will find themselves as much out of harmony as they are now in harmony with their present surroundings.

If women chose there is no doubt they could do a great deal to call attention to the inhuman absurdity of our repressive prison methods, and hasten the day of their ending, and of better provision for the maimed and the halt in body and mind.

Why should not women do something quite independently of officialdom, and so bring women's influence into play on behalf of their sisters—and their brothers too? They might find inspiration in the words of the superintendent of the Massachusetts Women's Reformatory: "How can we hope to save these women when you men talk of prisoners and punishment? This place is

a laboratory, a clinic."

The true distinction, is not between men and women, but between official machines and human beings.

There is a good deal to be said for a policy of boycott. But, while starting something independent and unofficial, we might at the same time press (as the Penal Reform League suggests) for the employment in prisons of carefully selected and trained women as nurses and as stewards in all prisons, as well as governors and medical officers in women's prisons. What a difference it would make in a prison if there were one or two, or more, trained nurses looking after the health of the prisoners and the sanitary conditions of the prison, and a woman in charge of the feeding, etc. They should be cultured women whose heart was in the work, who would speak to the doctor and governor as social equals. But who would do the selecting? The present commission could hardly be trusted to do it. Their attempts in this direction so far have not proved successful. So proposals include a demand for women on the commission, and perhaps a special committee of women to select women officials.

ARTHUR ST. JOHN.

ELSIE SMITH STILL IN PRISON.

The following copies of Petitions issued by the Women's Freedom League for the release of Elsie Kathleen Smith will be of interest to our readers:—

Petition to the Home Secretary.

We, the undersigned, petition for the *immediate release of Elsie Kathleen Smith*, formerly W.R.A.F. clerk, who was recently sentenced at the Old Bailey to four months' imprisonment in the second division for attempting to smother her baby. The child was only a few days old at the time, and the evidence showed clearly that the girl was ill and hysterical when the child was born; she had been deserted by a Canadian officer (whose name was suppressed in court); was left to find her way into a Salvation Army home; and that she had just received an intimation that her own people refused to allow her to take the child home.

Petition to the Prime Minister.

We, the undersigned, protest strongly against the name of the Canadian officer being suppressed recently by the court which sentenced Elsie Kathleen Smith (whom he had deserted) to four months' imprisonment in the second division for attempting to smother her baby; and we demand that the Government shall carry through a Bill without delay to compel the court to publish the name of the father as well as the mother in similar cases in future, and to insist that the father as well as the mother shall henceforth be present in court at such trials.

Hundreds of signatures have been received for the above. Monday, September 29th, was the day fixed for forwarding them to headquarters, but at the last moment Mr. Griffin, of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, asked us to extend the time a few days longer, when he undertook to obtain many further signatures. Copies of the petitions, have, therefore, been sent to all the branches of the Federation in London, numbering about a hundred. The National Federation of Women Teachers is also taking up the matter very widely, and obtaining many signatures.

REMEMBER!

OUR
GREEN, WHITE, & GOLD FAIR
AT

CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER.

FRIDAY and SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28 and 29.

SEND us Goods for Christmas Presents,
and BUY your Christmas Presents from us.

General Stall : : Mrs. Tanner and Mrs. Mustard
Handkerchief Stall } The Misses Underwood and
Miss Marlan Reeves
Toy Stall : : : The Misses Stutchbury
White Stall : : Mrs. Lloyd and Mrs. Holmes
Literature Stall : Mrs. Metge and Mrs. Pierotti
South Eastern }
Branches Stall } Miss White
Paper and String } Mrs. Evans and Miss Dorothy
Goods Stall } Evans
Penny Stall : : Miss White
Vote Stall : : (In Memory of Mrs. Snow, kindly
provided by Mr. Snow)

Montgomery Boroughs Stalls:—

(1) General : : Miss A. M. Clark
(2) Produce : : }

The Friends of Armenia, the Independent W.S.P.U., the Women's Freedom League Nine Elms Settlement, League of the Church Militant, Women's International League, Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and Free Church League will also have stalls at this Fair.

Women's Freedom League.

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.1.

Telegrams—"DESPARD, MUSEUM 1429 LONDON."

Telephone—MUSEUM 1429.

Colours—GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD.

Hon. Treasurer—Dr. E. KNIGHT.

Hon. Organising Secretary—Mrs. SCHOFIELD COATES.

"VOTE" Sales Department—Hon. Head: Miss ALIX M. CLARK.

Literature Department—

Hon. Heads: Miss H. NORMANTON, B.A. (Literary);

Mrs. METGE, and Mrs. PIEROTTI (Business).

General Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS.



DARE TO
BE FREE

Wednesday, October 8.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Clara Andrew. Subject: "Adoption in Relation to the Unwanted Child" (the work of the National Children Adoption Association).

Wednesday, October 8.—Open-air Meeting, Hyde Park, 7 p.m. (if free).

Wednesday, October 8.—Green, White, and Gold Fair Committee, 144, High Holborn, 6.30 p.m.

Thursday, October 9.—Open-air Meeting, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

Saturday, October 11.—National Executive Committee, 144, High Holborn, 10 a.m.

Monday, October 13.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 7 p.m. Speaker: Mr. Maung Pu, B.A., Barrister-at-Law (President Burma Reform League). Subject: "Position of Women in Burma."

Wednesday, October 15.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Lind-af-Hageby. Subject: "The Re-valuation of Women."

Wednesday, October 15.—Open-air Meeting, Hyde Park, 7 p.m. (if free).

Thursday, October 16.—Open-air Meeting, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, October 22.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. William Aird. Subject: "The Food of the Future."

Wednesday, October 29.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss F. Penrose Philp. Subject: "Juvenile Delinquency: Why Did the Child Offend?"

Provinces.

Monday, October 6.—Westcliff. Speaker: Miss Underwood.
Monday, October 20.—Westcliff. Speaker: Mr. Elvin. Subject: "Local Problems and the Municipal Election."

Thursday, October 23.—Ashford. Public Meeting. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood. Subject: "What the Women's Freedom League stands for."

Friday, October 24.—Swansea. Public Meeting, Central Hall. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro.

Monday, November 3.—Westcliff. Speaker: Dr. Charlotte Shields. Subject: "Pre-Natal Conditions and the Mother."

November 10.—Jumble Sale, Middlesbrough. All Saints' Schoolroom, 3 p.m. Parcels to be sent to 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe Road.

Other Societies.

Saturday, October 4.—North Kensington I.L.P., 8, Bonchurch Road, Ladbroke Grove, at 8 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans. Subject: "The Need for Women on Public Bodies." Subject: "Fair Wages for Housewives."

Monday, October 6.—Shoreditch Herald League. Open-air Meeting, Hoxton Church, at 8 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Nevinson.

Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett.

To our old and valued member, Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett, the founder of the Northern Men's Federation, we offer our warmest appreciation for many years of untiring devotion to the cause of women's freedom. Our very best wishes go with her in her approaching absence from this country, and we shall look forward to her return.

Northern Men's Federation.

Special thanks to our very good friends and splendid fellow-workers, the Northern Men's Federation, who, at Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett's suggestion, have given to the Women's Freedom League the balance of their funds. We shall always be sure of ready help and support from these stalwart Scottish champions of fair play and freedom for women in every case of injustice and oppression.

OUR TREASURY.

NATIONAL FUND.

Amount Previously acknowledged, October, 1907, to December, 1918, £31,454 1s. 5d.

Amount previously acknowledged £ s. d. 726 6 10

Special Emergency War Fund—
"A Friend" 3 2 6
W. R. Snow, Esq. 2 0 0

Organisers' Fund—
Glasgow Branch 5 2 6

Special Protest Fund (Elsie Smith)—
Miss Mary Anderson 20 0 0

Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck 1 1 0

Miss Cooper (per Miss Neal) 10 0

Mrs. E. Eagle 5 0

Mrs. L. B. Fox Strangeways 5 0

Mrs. Terry 2 0

Anonymous 2 0

Mrs. E. G. Kither 1 0

Northern Men's Federation 2 11 6

Mrs. Schofield Coates 5 4 2

Mrs. M. Lester 3 0 0

Miss H. M. Smith 1 1 0

Miss Newsome 1 1 0

Dr. Knight 13 0

Miss M. I. Saunders 12 6

Miss Woodall 10 0

Miss Doris Phillips 8 4

Mrs. Stebbing (Green, White and Gold Fair) 5 0

Miss Amelia M. M. Thuroff 5 0

Miss Maud Fussell 3 6

Miss Eleanor Mardon 3 6

Mrs. Putz 3 6

Miss T. L. Prankerd 2 6

Miss Alice Jefferson Greene 1 0

Miss M. Hales 1 0

Miss Hambling 1 0

Miss W. Hodge 1 0

Sundries 6 0 0

Office Sales 4 2

Collections 5 12 8

£779 19 8

Cheques to be made payable to the Women's Freedom League and crossed "London, Provincial and South-Western Bank, Ltd."

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE SETTLEMENT.

93, Nine Elms Lane, London, S.W.8.

This week we have to thank Miss Dorrie Davis for having made a child's nightdress for the Guest House, and Miss K. Holmes for sending heather and ling for the play club, and Miss Riggall 1s. Miss Turton has made a kind contribution of sweets for the children and jumble goods. We shall be glad to receive names for the proposed Needlework Guild, and Miss Isobel Harvey, who is kindly knitting a cot blanket with odd pieces of wool, begs for any odd ends or balls of wool (any colour) that might otherwise be wasted. We have two small children sent to us at a moment's notice, and should be very grateful if anyone would volunteer to take them out, any time during the next fortnight. We still need old blankets and towels and fruit.

SPECIAL INJUSTICES FUND.

Many thanks to the friends who have already subscribed to our special protest fund. The splendid public meeting was a heavy expense, as it had to be made known very widely, but the large and influential audience rewarded us. Elsie Smith must be got out of Holloway; much work may still have to be done to get this result. From all over the country I expect contributions to reach me, both to end this poor girl's imprisonment and to be ready for immediate action in similar cases.

144 High Holborn, E. KNIGHT,
London, W.C.1. Hon. Treasurer.

FRIDAY,
October 3,
1919.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

LET US SEND YOU "THE VOTE" EVERY WEEK POST FREE.

Rate: 6/6 twelve months; 3/3 six months.

Branch Notes.

Ipswich.

M. T. Hossack, (Hon. Sec.)

Though still, unfortunately, small in numbers, the branch still carries on. Last June we had to move as our quarters were needed for other purposes. Mrs. Lord, Queen Street, has most kindly placed her pretty drawing-room at our disposal, and our winter meetings will be held there every third Thursday. Last session we worked for the Syrian and Palestine Relief Fund. A friend kindly gave our member, Mrs. Morgan, a most generous present of material, from which we made some pretty and useful dresses, which were much appreciated by the committee. We are now starting work for the Green, Gold and White Fair, and hope to send a nice parcel of things for it. While we are working we have papers and discussions on different subjects, both political and social.

Middlesborough.

A very successful branch meeting was held last Monday evening at the Suffrage Rooms, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe Road, when the winter's work was arranged. It was decided to hold business, social, discussion, and propaganda meetings alternatively during the coming months. We are holding a jumble sale on Monday, November 10th, and shall be glad if all members and friends will begin to collect parcels. All things saleable, such as old clothes, furniture, ornaments, etc., will be most acceptable. The sale is to be held in All Saints Schoolroom; all parcels to be sent to the Suffrage Rooms, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe Road. A social meeting has been arranged to take place Monday, November 24th, particulars of which will appear in THE VOTE later.

THE DESPARD ARMS.

123 Hampstead Road, N.W.

Good accommodation now ready, under new management. Bed-sitting Rooms, single or double. Write—Mrs. FISHER, Minerva Café, 144 High Holborn, W.C.1.

64-PAGE BOOK ABOUT HERBS AND HOW TO USE THEM, 2d. Send for one.—TRIMNELL, The Herbalist, 144, Richmond Road, Cardiff. Established 1879.

LINDUM HOUSE, BEXHILL-ON-SEA.—Home School on progressive Thought lines; large garden, cricket-field, sea bathing; small classes: special care given to delicate girls.—Principal, Miss RICHARDSON, B.A.

SUPPORT HOME INDUSTRIES.—Machine-knitted Golf Coats, Jumpers, Cardigans, Socks, etc.; all coats made to measurement; any style copied.—C. & C., 1, The Meads, Ringwood, Hants.

WANTED.—Costumes, coats, furs, underwear, gentlemen's and children's clothing, house furnishings. Specially good prices given.—HELENE, 5, Hanover Road, Scarborough.

TYPEWRITING.—Authors' MSS. Examination Papers, Letters, Circulars, General Copying, Duplicating, etc.—Miss J. Trimnell, 8 Moira Terrace, Cardiff.

CLARA REED'S Studio of Elocution and Dramatic Art. Day and evening classes in Elocution, Public Speaking, etc. 21s. per term, 12 lessons. Classes limited to 10 students to insure individual tuition. Special classes Tuesday 3—5 p.m. Friday 2.30—4.30, 7—8.30, and 8.30—10 p.m. Private lessons, ten half-hour, £3 3s. All communications to—MISS CLARA REED, c/o Weekes, 14, Hanover Street, Hanover Square, W.



Just facing the W.F.L. is the CAMEO CORNER,

With its wonderful selection of Barbaric Beads, lovely Pebbles, Engraved Gems, and all sorts of things for the most refined Tastes.

Selections sent on approval to all parts of the country. Please mention "THE VOTE."

GOOD'S CAMEO CORNER,
1, New Oxford Street, W.C.1.



Suffrage Health Food Stores,

231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough.

BUY OUR GOODS & HELP THE MOVEMENT

Send for New List. Carriage paid on orders over £1. Large Stock of Vegetarian and other Health Foods.

THE HANDICRAFTS, 82 HIGH STREET, HAMPSTEAD, N.W.3.

Handweavings, Leatherwork, Jewellery, Basket-Work, Hand-made Lace, Pottery, etc.

COLOURED HAND-WOVEN COTTONS from 4s. per yard.

PATTERNS OF MATERIALS SENT FREE ON APPLICATION.

POTTERY PACKED AND DESPATCHED.

ISLINGTON DENTAL SURGERY,

69, UPPER STREET, N.

Mr. CHODWICK BROWN, Surgeon Dentist,

Mr. Fredk. G. Boucher, Assistant Dental Surgeon.
Established 35 Years.

Gas Administered Daily by qualified Medical Man, Fee 7s. 6d. Nurse in attendance. Mechanical Work in all its Branches. Send Postcard for Pamphlet. N.B.—No Showcase at door. CONSULTATIONS FREE. Telephone: 3795 North.

IF you Believe in Equal Rights and Opportunities and an Equal Moral Standard for Women and Men,

Join the Women's Freedom League.

Fill in your name and address and send it, with subscription (minimum 1s.) to the Secretary, Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

Name _____

Address _____