

THE VOTE,
MARCH 24, 1922
ONE PENNY.

WOMEN POLICE—SHORTT STILL OBSTINATE.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 1922

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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WHEN I AM M.P.

Prospective Coalition Candidate for Govan. Author of "Women and War Work." Member of Executive Committees—N.U.S.E.C.; Council for Representation of Women on League of Nations; Women's Committee—English Speaking Union, etc. Member of Committee of Re-union of British War Missions in America. For sometime Commissioner of National Savings Movement. Just returned from America—At Washington Conference.

Incidentally, may I say, being cautious, that I am not at all sure about being an M.P. soon, and I am convinced far too few women are going to be for some time to come. I think we need more women in the House, and I think we need women of varied types and beliefs.

Women will range themselves according to their political philosophies with one or other of the parties, and from this broader aspect the electorate ought to be concerned more with their beliefs and qualities and abilities as candidates, than with their being women. But there is another aspect to every candidate, man or woman, and that is the question of what special knowledge they bring to that "pool of wisdom" that the ideal House ought to be. We may claim justly, I think, that whatever other special knowledge women candidates may bring, they bring the quality of being useful, even if differing, experts on women's needs and aspirations. In a



country where men exclusively have legislated and voted for a long period, such a quality is of great value.

The governing of a country is among humanity's greatest tasks, and that our policy internationally, imperially, and at home, should express the highest conceptions of the moral and social wisdom our people have attained, is of supreme importance. To some of us that means, that woven into its very warp and woof there must be the realisation in practical forms of the equal value, rights and opportunities of women, to give and to have, to serve and to govern.

I shall work for this end, believing profoundly that in the full and real freedom of men and women lies our greatest hope of happiness and well-being. I shall work along the lines of the political philosophy I hold, for the maintenance of a free commonwealth, and the spread of unity and good-will throughout the world.

HELEN FRASER.

Other issues of this Series in "The Vote"—Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY, July 15, 1921; Miss MABEL BILLSON, July 29, 1921; Mrs. SCOTT GATTY, August 12, 1921; Mrs. ELEANOR BARTON, August 26, 1921; Mrs. WINTRINGHAM, M.P., September 23, 1921; Dr. ETHEL BENTHAM, October 7, 1921; Mrs. AYRTON GOULD, October 21, 1921; Mrs. MARJORIE PEASE, J.P., October 28, 1921; Miss MAY P. GRANT, January 6, 1922; COMMANDANT MARY S. ALLEN, O.B.E., February 17, 1922; LADY COOPER, March 17, 1922.

LIFE IN ASYLUMS.

The Departmental Committee of the Board of Control, appointed to enquire into Dr. Lomax' charges concerning the administration of Asylums, is still sitting and hearing evidence. It will be remembered that Dr. Lomax refused to appear before this body as it is departmental, and not independent. The Committee has no women members, and the investigations chiefly concern the men patients. Occasionally a former attendant bears witness, that, like the celebrated Shut-Eye Sentry, he "didn't see nothin' wrong," and a Visiting Committee member explains how impossible it is in practice for the Committee to give real supervision when their visits to wards are invariably announced in advance, but for the most part it is left to former patients to disclose instances of abuse which they saw or experienced themselves.

Mr. Ellis, Alderman on the Surrey County Council, is reported as making the extraordinary assertion that a much higher moral standard prevailed among the male than among the female attendants, and he recommended reliable male attendants for the mixed women's wards.

Of former patients, a retired Civil Servant complained of medical neglect, absolutely vile food, and starvation diet. He found the attendants patient, self-reliant, good class Englishmen; if any patient was cured it was "thanks to them." An ex-police inspector described ill-treatment of, and blows he had seen given to, several patients who died in the Sanatorium, not very long afterwards. After one of these deaths, some attendants were proceeded against. The fault of attendants was in not reporting cruelty and brutality of their comrades. In consequence of his dissatisfaction, he was doped for his wife's visit, so that she was afraid to carry out her intention of removing him.

Ninety per cent. of patients in public institutions did not know of their legal right to communicate with the Board of Control. A notice should be put up.

A Nottingham boot operative did not see any harsh treatment at his Asylum, but the food was absolutely insufficient.

Lunacy a Crime.

To a deputation from the National Council for Lunacy Reform Sir Alfred Mond stated, on March 16th, that he was about to introduce a Bill which would meet some of their suggestions. He admitted that lunacy was now treated, not as a disease, but a crime.

One More Departmental Committee.

The Board of Control and the Health Minister have appointed the undermentioned to consider the Nursing Service and its improvement in County and Borough Mental Hospitals. Though women patients exceed the men, and though female nurses are said to be so much more in need of improvement than male attendants, the Committee includes only two women to four men, though a mental hospital matron is to be added. A medical woman will also be necessary, if the Committee is to be properly representative and satisfactory to women:—DR. C. HUBERT BOND, C.B.E., F.R.C.P. (Chairman, Commissioner of the Board of Control); DAME LOUISE GILBERT SAMUEL, D.B.E., Member of the Chelsea Borough Council; MRS. HOW-MARTYN, M.Sc., Chairman of the Middlesex County Mental Hospital (Wandsworth Visiting Committee); E. A. MEDUS, ESQ., Chairman of the Surrey County Mental Hospital (Netherne Visiting Committee); DR. H. WOLSELEY-LEWIS, F.R.C.S., Medical Superintendent, Kent County Mental Hospital, Maidstone; DR. G. F. BARHAM, Medical Superintendent, London County Mental Hospital, Claybury. The name of the matron of the mental hospital is not yet announced.

In the House.

MR. GILLIS asked the Health Minister (March 13th) about a young girl, E.S., admitted from Rochdale Infirmary to Prestwich Asylum on June 6th, 1919, for a nervous breakdown after the sudden death of her soldier sweetheart, and for having, in her grief, walked half-way into a pond and out again: did he know that the Union doctor said she would recover in two weeks,

but that, during this doctor's holiday, she was committed to Prestwich against Section 22 of the Lunacy Act, and against her parents' wishes, who had repeatedly applied to the Visiting Committee under Section 79 of the Act, promising to accept full responsibility with regard to her, but had been callously refused; and would he take immediate steps to have her released to her relatives in accordance with the provisions of the Statute?

SIR A. MOND promised investigation of this case the next time a Medical Commissioner of the Board of Control visited Prestwich Asylum, and would communicate later on.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the Health Minister (March 20th) whether the Law Officers were consulted as to the legality of substituting the term, mental specialists, for medical practitioners, in the wording of Section 49 of the Lunacy Act, 1890. If not, would he see that this was done?

SIR A. MOND denied that the one term had been substituted for the other, and saw no need for consulting the Law Officers. (See last week's VOTE, page 86).

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the National Executive Committee was held last Saturday, at 144, High Holborn, W.C., Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., being in the chair. The Organisation Sub-Committee had met the previous day, and reported satisfactory work done by the organisers, Miss Brimson in Liverpool, and Miss White in Hastings, Bexhill, and Rye, as well as London meetings arranged by Miss Kirby. The annual reports of the Secretarial work, the Political Department, and the Literature Department, to be submitted at the Annual Conference, April 29th, were considered by the Committee, who also dealt with the work of the various departments since its last meeting. Miss Alix M. Clark reported the arrangements she had made for the Women's Freedom League Campaign at Torquay in Easter week, during the Annual Conference of the National Union of Teachers. The special subject to be discussed at the public meeting, organised by Miss Clark, is "Married Women's Right to Work." The Committee also decided to run a Clyde Coast Campaign again this summer, and asked Miss Alix M. Clark to undertake arrangements for it.

The Executive Committee sent a resolution of protest to the Home Secretary against the threatened disbandment of the Metropolitan Police Women patrols. The retention of the present women patrols was urged in the interests of morality, because of the intimate knowledge the women patrols had gained of their special work. It was also pointed out to the Home Secretary that the preventive work done by women patrols was cheaper than the punishment of delinquents.

A resolution of protest was sent by the Executive Committee to the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary, against the system of compulsory examination for venereal diseases which is being enforced on the natives of the British Protectorate of Uganda, as evidenced by the dismissal of a woman doctor for refusing to carry out compulsory examination of native women for venereal disease.

A resolution of protest was sent to the Prime Minister, Sir Arthur Balfour, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain, against the nomination of Mr. Harris, of the Colonial Office, as the British Government's representative on the League of Nations Commission on the Traffic in Women and Children. It was pointed out to these gentlemen, that, as this question vitally affects women, the Government should have appointed a woman as its representative; that in any case the Government should have consulted the women's organisations on such an appointment; and that, as a matter of fact, in selecting Mr. Harris, the Government has appointed a man, whose views at the Traffic Conference in June of last year in Geneva were contrary to those held by any women delegates present, as well as against the majority of all present, notably in the matter of passport regulations. These resolutions were passed unanimously.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Infants and their Teachers.

LIEUT.-COL. HILDER asked the President of the Board of Education whether, in view of the decision to continue the attendance at school of children under the age of six, he would consider the advisability, in order to secure economy without detriment to the interests of those infants, of putting them in charge not of qualified teachers but of a special sub-class of teachers, or even of voluntary workers, in centres where the attendance justified this, seeing that it would be possible to give suitable employment in this direction to war widows, and, at the same time, effect economy? MR. FISHER said he did not think that a system of staffing classes for little children, who required care and training rather than instruction, by means of certificated and uncertificated teachers, was necessary; and he was fully alive to the possibility of a more economical staffing of such classes.

University Scholarships.

MR. FISHER, replying to a question by SIR CYRIL COBB, said that the Government had decided that no new awards of State Scholarships would be made in the financial years 1922-3 and 1923-4, but that the question would be reviewed at the end of two years.

Teachers' Superannuation.

MRS. WINTRINGHAM asked the President of the Board of Education whether the 5 per cent. deduction from teachers' salaries would be made in those areas where the education authority had not adopted the Burnham Scale? MR. FISHER replied that he would ask her to await the introduction of the Bill which would deal with the matter.

Open-Air Schools.

MR. FISHER, replying to a question by MR. TREVELYAN THOMSON, said that since the beginning of 1921 the Board of Education had been obliged, by financial considerations, to suspend approval of proposals for the provision of 28 open-air schools and 19 schools for mentally defective children. He could not say how soon it would be possible to authorise new expenditure on institutions of those types.

Cable Room, Central Telegraph Office (Women).

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR asked the Postmaster-General whether he could now make any statement with regard to the alleged displacement of women in the cable room, Central Telegraph Office, by youths and boys who had not served in the Army; and whether, if the facts were as alleged, he could explain the reason for that policy? MR. PEASE said the introduction of women into the cable room was a war-time expedient, and was governed by the general pledges given to the Post Office staff as to reversion to pre-war practice. It was in pursuance of those pledges that the female staff in the cable room had been gradually withdrawn. The Postmaster-General proposed to discuss with the male staff concerned the introduction of a proportion of women as a permanent arrangement.

Treatment of Children (Hong Kong).

MR. T. GRIFFITHS and MR. CHARLES EDWARDS repeated their questions of the previous week about the *mui tsai* system prevailing in Hong Kong.

Last Tuesday, in a somewhat lengthy statement, MR. CHURCHILL made the tardy announcement that a scheme would be drawn up for the abolition of the *mui tsai* system.

Electoral Reform.

CAPT. WEDGWOOD BENN asked the Minister of Health whether he had prepared any report on electoral reform for submission to the Government? SIR

ALFRED MOND replied that he had, on his own initiative, had a report on various methods of electoral reform prepared for the information of the Government.

Public Assistance (Disqualification).

SIR ALFRED MOND, replying to a question by MR. JOHN GUEST, said that Section 46 of the Local Government Act, 1894, provided that a person should be disqualified for being elected, or being a member or chairman, of a council of a parish or of a district other than a borough or of a board of guardians, if he had within twelve months before his election received Union or parochial relief. Whether the relief was or was not given by way of loan was immaterial.

Women Police Patrols.

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR asked the Home Secretary what cause was to be assigned to the women of the Metropolitan Police Women Patrols for their dismissal; and whether any compensation, and, if so, what amount was to be paid to them? MR. SHORTT replied that the disbandment of the Metropolitan Police Women Patrols had been decided upon as a measure of economy. Their engagements were terminable at any time by one month's notice, and no question of compensation arose. LADY ASTOR further asked if it was not a fact that those patrols were made pensionable by Act of Parliament in the Police Pensions Act? Was the Home Secretary aware that his statement in the House the previous week, that they were not entitled to pensions, had been challenged by legal authority? And was he not also aware that everyone knew that it was not economy getting rid of these women? MR. SHORTT said, that, so far as pensions were concerned, he gathered that he would have to wait for a decision of the Courts before replying; but undoubtedly it would save a very large sum of money to disband the women patrols. MR. BRIANT asked if the Home Secretary could say why it was that the Irish Constabulary, with less than one year's service, were to receive pensions, and the women patrols, who had got longer service, were not to receive pensions? *No reply was given to this question.* CAPT. W. BENN then asked if the Home Secretary could say, when those women were engaged, if they understood that their terms were to be comparable to the engagement of ordinary men constables? MR. SHORTT said "Certainly not, quite the contrary." LADY ASTOR exclaimed "Oh, Oh!" MR. G. MURRAY asked the Home Secretary whether he was aware of the strong feeling being evinced throughout the Country on the part of women's organisations against the disbanding of the Metropolitan police women patrols, whether he would take into consideration the important duties being performed by those women police, which, owing to their special female character, could not be so efficiently performed by male police, and whether, in those circumstances, rather than abolish that section of the police force altogether, he would recognize the necessity of maintaining at least a nucleus upon which to build up again when economic conditions improved? MR. SHORTT said he had received representations in the sense indicated in the first part of the question. Duties of a special female character would continue to be, as they had been, performed by women. He was advised, that if it were decided again to enrol women police, such a nucleus would be of no value. F.A.U.

OUR LITERATURE DEPARTMENT.

"My Experiences as an Asylum Doctor." By Dr. Lomax. The Literature Department of the W.F.L. is prepared to lend this book at the rate of 6d. a week.

"Woman: A Citizen." By A. E. Metcalfe, B.Sc. (2/6.) This very useful little book, which is intended more especially for the guidance of voters, and which deals with Government, both Municipal and Parliamentary, is a perfect mine of information, and can be obtained at this Office.

THE VOTE.

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 FRI-DAY, MARCH 24th, 1922.

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

WIFE "COERCION."

Last week the anomalous position of the married woman in Great Britain was once again emphasised in our Courts of Law. The Peel case has drawn public attention to the fact that, if the husband is present when his wife commits any crime other than murder, treason, manslaughter, or the keeping of a disorderly or gambling house, the presumption is that she was acting under the coercion of her husband, and she must be discharged. This was statutory law, and its origin can be traced back to King Ina, of the West Saxons, who reigned in 712. Since then it has become embodied in the common law as administered by the Judges ever since the Judges were first appointed under the Norman Kings, and it is founded on the assumption that a woman would not dare to contradict her husband. In commenting on the application of this law in the Peel case, Mr. Justice Darling gave it as his opinion that this was not a doctrine which should be extended, seeing how things have altered in the last few years in this country, where women are now serving on juries, and becoming Members of Parliament. The unanimity with which these sentiments have been echoed and re-echoed in the Press is quite amusing, and we are not surprised to learn that Lord Ullswater, whom we knew better as the Speaker of the House of Commons in pre-Suffrage days, has asked the Lord Chancellor if he will introduce a Bill "to abolish this doctrine which appears to date from the reigns of King Caute and King Ina, and bring the law into closer accord with the well-known facts of present-day matrimonial life?" Letters are still appearing in the newspapers pointing out the absurdity of this particular law, and calling for its immediate repeal. We do not deny its absurdity, but we submit that the time is more than ripe for the removal of even greater absurdities in the law, which continue to make the position of married women in this country almost intolerable. A married woman has by law no rights of guardianship over her children compared with the rights of the father of those children; a British woman has not the right to retain her own nationality if she marries a foreigner, but automatically takes the nationality of her husband. A married woman has extraordinary difficulty in conducting a business on her own account, because by law she can sometimes escape payment of her just debts, which naturally makes it very difficult for her to obtain credit. For Income Tax purposes her income "is deemed to be the income of her husband," and if she is in the position to claim a rebate, this is in the ordinary course of things paid to her husband. If her husband dies without a Will, she can only claim one-third of his property, and that only during her own life-time; and a husband can, with the consent of the law, will his property away from his wife and leave her penniless at his death. Moreover, the "domicile" of the wife must be the same as the husband's, even if they live away from each other for ten or twenty years. A husband is not bound by law to support his wife to any greater extent than just to keep her from coming upon the rates. Yet, if a married woman tries to secure or retain a post as a medical woman, a teacher, a nurse, or a charwoman, under local governing bodies, she is refused, or dismissed on the ground that she has a husband to support her. Curiously enough, however, the Home Secretary is contemplating training and employing the wives of policemen to undertake some of the work of the women police patrols whom he now proposes to disband. The Women's Freedom League is not prepared to support any demand for the repeal of a particular

law because in some extraordinary case it happens to turn out to the advantage of a woman; but what we have been demanding for the past fifteen years, and shall continue to demand, is the removal of all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women. Before the General Election in 1918, Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law signed a manifesto saying that it would be the duty of the New Government to carry out that demand. The Lord Chancellor has promised to set up an expert committee to go into the subject as a whole. We shall very strongly protest if women are excluded from this committee.

STARVING RUSSIA.

In common with thirteen other Women's Societies, the Women's Freedom League is supporting a Joint Demonstration on March 29th, organised by the Women's International League, to convince the Government that organised women are keenly desirous that adequate aid be granted to famine-stricken Russia from National funds. What is wanted is either a grant of money for relief, or credits to Russia, to enable her to buy food and start her industries again, or both grants and credits. We cannot ourselves afford to let the wheat crop of the Volga Valley fail again next year. The famine now is chiefly due to last summer's disastrous drought. One half of Europe's wheat comes from Russia, and one-tenth of the loaves eaten in the British Isles are usually made of Russian wheat. If Russia has no help and can grow no wheat, it means dearer bread next year for every country in Europe. All food sent out reaches the starving people, and private British relief agencies have kept many thousands of children alive up till now. They must die, however, before the next harvest unless relief can be immensely increased.

The United States have voted £5,000,000, and Italy, France, and other countries have contributed. Our Government, last Friday, voted £100,000; public opinion must support the Government in this, and urge that a large additional sum shall immediately be sent; public money can, of course, only be sent if public opinion supports and demands it. As facts become known this demand strengthens, but there is not a day to lose. Women electors, especially, cannot rest whilst millions of children, women, and men are dying helplessly. Next Wednesday, at 8 p.m., we have our chance, at Kingsway Hall, of sending forth a united demand from organised women. A crowded hall will have a great effect.

WOMEN AND WIGS.

The fetish of the "uncovered head" is again with us. Like Life itself, no one knows its beginning, for this matter goes back much further than St. Paul, and apparently it has no end. A committee of as many as five of our Chief Law Lords are debating in solemn conclave whether our future women barristers are to wear wigs, or three-cornered caps à la Portia, in spite of the fact that, with the exception of the bands—emblematic of the two Tables of the Law—nothing worn professionally by a barrister has any legal significance. According to the *Dundee Courier*, until the end of the 17th century, the general run of barristers dressed like other people—only Judges and Serjeants-at-Law wore any distinctive dress. Under Queen Anne the Queen's Counsel set out to rival the serjeants, and universally decided to wear silk gowns, and full-bottomed wigs in Court, and for some time the new fashion was strongly resented by the Bench. Miss Kyle and Miss Deverill of Belfast, our first women barristers, petitioned the Lord Chief Justice for a special dispensation from the wig, but in vain. We sympathise with them, especially when we learn that wigs for women barristers will need to be larger and correspondingly heavier than those worn by the men, and we share Lord Campbell's surprise that "this grotesque ornament, fit only for an African Chief, should be considered indispensably necessary for the administration of justice in the 19th century!"

WOMEN AND HOUSING.

A Conference of Women's Organisations was held on March 9th at Olympia, when considerable criticism of the Government's housing policy was passed by the various speakers. Lady Emmott presided at the morning session.

Dr. Marion Phillips, D.Sc. (Econ.), Chief Woman Officer of the Labour Party, and Vice-Chairman of the Women's Section of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Associations, said that over a quarter of a million people lived in homes of one room, and over half a million in two-roomed homes. Now, at the beginning of 1922, on the lower population figures of the Census of 1911, and taking into consideration the stoppage of building from 1914, the number of houses urgently required in England, Wales, and Scotland to-day is quite 1,250,000. Of the number of houses needed in England and Wales (over 800,000), the number now provided by local authorities under the national scheme has been stopped at 176,000, although recent building contracts are at least 40 per cent. cheaper, a fact which is not noted in the Geddes Report. In Manchester, in 1919, it was estimated that 52,000 houses are urgently needed; but the number had been cut down to 3,800. Manchester required 2,000 new houses a year, so that their position in 1922 was worse than it was in 1919. In Smethwick, in 1919, 5,500 houses were needed, and the Ministry of Health had sanctioned 3,684. They had now reduced this number to 600, of which 400 were completed. The Council had more than 3,600 applicants. An example of overcrowding was in a small ward in November, 1919, where there were 350 small houses, viz., four or five rooms, containing three families or more. In Southampton, 5,500 houses were needed. Of the inhabited houses, 50, inhabited by 250 persons, were totally unfit for human habitation. About 2,287 persons had applied for 495 houses. In Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1911, one-third of the population was overcrowded. The position was now much worse. The Council's programme was

for 5,173 houses. Only 780 were approved, and these were not yet completed. In King's Lynn, hundreds of people were waiting for new houses, and six-roomed dwellings were being occupied by two and three families.

Dr. Sloan Chesser (Hon. Sec. of the National Baby Week Council) said the present shortage of housing had a far-reaching effect upon infant health. An infant spent many hours indoors, and when a family was living in one, two, or three rooms, the evil influence upon the child was accentuated. As a rule, there was no separate cot, and the child slept with its parents, in an ill-ventilated atmosphere. Adenoids, enlarged tonsils, and rickets resulted in consequence. Rickets, though also due to wrong feeding, was largely a consequence of bad housing, and 80 per cent. of the children in L.C.C. Schools showed signs of the disease. Apart from rickets, thousands of babies were sacrificed every year to the infectious diseases carried by flies, which were more prevalent in poor areas. The housing shortage also increased the menace of germ diseases, from infant cholera to measles and diphtheria, whilst the danger of venereal disease with all its devastating effect upon infant life was very serious.

Councillor Sylvia Reiss (Lambeth Borough Council), gave the result of eight years practical experience in a crowded part of London, and 2½ years on the Housing Committee of the Lambeth Borough Council. She extolled cottages or cottage flats as against "High Dwellings," and contended that the lowest minimum for a normal family was one large living-room, kitchen, scullery, bath-room, three bed-rooms, and an airing ground.

A resolution was unanimously passed expressing deep disappointment at the Government's abandonment of its Housing Scheme, "incomplete though it was," and declaring "that this is a problem that needs very urgent attention and national solution."

WOMEN POLICE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

Women Police to-day are looked upon as a necessary part of nearly every metropolitan police force in America, although, a few years ago, the mere mention of police-women as a possibility would have been considered a joke. The first American policewoman to be appointed was Miss Alice Stebbins Wells, of Los Angeles, whose work became so widely appreciated that in 1915 she was allowed six months leave of absence to tour the United States, and plead the necessity of appointing women police in every large city. The American police force is managed federally, so that the number and authority of policewomen vary with every state. Chicago has a large uniformed force of policewomen, mainly through the instrumentality of Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House. The women police in Washington, D.C., whose chief is Mrs. Van Winkle, did some particularly important work during the War, when a large number of soldiers and girls were stationed about the National capital. In 1918 Dr. Anna Howard Shaw was sworn in as a member of the Metropolitan Police of Washington. In New York the belief in the need for women in the police force was advocated from an early date, and to-day one of the five Assistant Commissioners of Police is a woman, Dr. Katherine P. Davis, who controls a large Welfare Department primarily concerned with the care of women and children. To-day New York has fifty-five policewomen, nineteen patrol women, a new women's bureau of the Police Department, a school for policewomen, and a police station managed entirely by women. For several years Mrs. Ellen O'Grady held the place of Special Deputy Police Commissioner in New York. Among other cities which have well-established

groups of policewomen, Indianapolis, Denver, and Detroit, are outstanding examples. In Denver, Colorado, to quote the Chief of the Police, the "best man in the Denver police force is a woman." This is Miss Roche, a graduate of Vassar College, and a post-graduate of Columbia University, who is said to have revolutionized the treatment of the young offenders in that district. Policewomen have also been appointed in Toronto, where they act as sworn-in constables, with full powers of arrest.

Women Police in Germany are not a uniformed force, and, strictly speaking, are more a welfare department of the police, but they are none the less a State service, and pensionable. Before the Revolution they were apparently in the service of the different towns where they were employed. Their duties and responsibilities vary very widely according to the district where they are employed; but they concern themselves primarily with women and young persons of either sex, and with delinquents brought to their notice by male constables. German policewomen date from 1903, but for years the work was in the hands of various voluntary associations. They have no power of arrest. One very important branch of their work is taking statements from children and young persons who have been assaulted. They are also in attendance on children in the Children's Courts. Police women have been working in Copenhagen since 1914, and last year the Danish Women's Council petitioned the Government for an increase, the petition being signed by 33 women's societies. The agitation for increasing the number of policewomen in Denmark has been going on all over the country since 1910.

DEPUTATIONS.

Deputation to Mr. Frank Briant, M.P.

Organised by the London Society for Women's Service, a deputation of representatives of Women's Organisations last week waited upon Mr. Frank Briant, M.P., for North Lambeth, in order to find out his position in regard to questions of particular interest to women. Mrs. Tanner represented the Women's Freedom League, and, on our behalf, put the following questions to Mr. Briant:—(1) Will you (a) introduce or (b) support legislation by which the age of consent for girls is raised to 18 years? (2) Will you do all in your power to safeguard the letter, and the spirit, of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act by urging the Government to point out to local governing bodies that it is illegal to dismiss or to prevent married women from holding any post under those bodies? (3) Will you urge upon the Government the necessity of including work for unemployed women in any schemes devised for securing work for unemployed men? Mrs. Oliver Strachey was in the Chair, and Mrs. Tanner reports that Mr. Briant's replies to most questions asked by the representatives of other societies were satisfactory, although he was in favour of continuing the separate taxation of married persons on the grounds that the family income must be the unit. Mr. Briant also did not believe in giving women police equal powers of arrest with men because of possible injury to the women; but in cases of child outrage he was in favour of giving much more severe sentences to men, and was inclined to reproach women for not making a greater outcry over the disgracefully lenient punishment meted out to such men. With regard to our own questions Mr. Briant's reply to the one on unemployed women was quite satisfactory; but in regard to married women's right to work he took the conventional view that a married woman with children ought not to work outside the home. Mrs. Tanner heckled him considerably on this question, and ultimately succeeded in securing his agreement to the illegality of dismissing married women from, or preventing them from holding posts under public bodies. With regard to raising the age of consent to criminal assault for girls to eighteen, Mr. Briant said that a Bill on practically the same lines as the Bishop of London's Bill was being introduced into the House of Commons, and he could do nothing to jeopardise it. This Bill, as our readers know, does not attempt to raise the age of consent above sixteen. Mrs. Tanner pointed out that a girl of sixteen was in other respects a child in the eyes of the law; she could not control her property until she was 21, or vote till she was 30; and she ought not to be considered able to consent to her own undoing before she was eighteen years of age. Mrs. Tanner reminded Mr. Briant that last year the Bishop of London's Bill was lost after he had given way on the question of age, and said that ought to be an object lesson. At the close of the proceedings Mr. Briant was cordially thanked for his kind reception of the members of this deputation.

Deputation to the Home Secretary.

Last Monday, the Home Secretary received, at the Home Office, a deputation from fifty-nine women's Societies organised by the National Council of Women, who protested against the disbandment of the Metropolitan Police Women Patrols. Lady Astor, M.P., introduced the deputation, and among the delegates were Mrs. Wilson Potter, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, Miss Tancred (representing women's police and patrol work in Scotland), Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., Lady Henry Bentinck, Lady Lytton, Commandant Allen, and Mrs. Dexter (of the Women's Freedom League). The Home Secretary's reply was to the effect that, while he recognised that the women police were doing very valuable work, this could not, really be described as police work proper—the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime. Their work, he said, was more in the nature of

welfare work, and to use money voted to police purposes for welfare work was not quite reasonable. It was true that certain duties would still have to be performed by women, but he proposed training the wives of policemen for this purpose! As to taking depositions in cases of child assault, a woman was already doing this, and her services would be retained. After the conference, Lady Astor said that the deputation had put forward arguments for the continuance of women police patrols that they felt certain would be backed up by the country. The chief points put before the Home Secretary were as follows:—

The value of the preventive work done by the women police was very great, not only in the moral salvation of women and girls, but in actual pounds, shillings, and pence. The maintenance in prison of women and girls, who had fallen, meant a far greater cost to the nation than the work of prevention. The figures quoted in the Geddes Report for the cost of maintaining the women police included many charges which would be continued even if the women police were disbanded. Women police work was in preservation of public order, and in the prevention of crime and offences against the law. The only reason that women police could not complete their police duties was that the recommendations of the Home Office Committee were not carried into effect; the women police were not sworn in and given the full power of constables. Over 500 girls went every week for advice to the women police.

The matter is now to be referred to Members of the House of Commons, who, it is felt, are not as a general rule sufficiently acquainted with the work of the women patrols, and a meeting has been arranged by Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., in one of the committee rooms of the House of Commons, to put the case for the retention of women police patrols before Members. In the meantime we urge members and friends of the Women's Freedom League to lose no time in writing to their local M.P.s., pressing upon them the necessity, in the interests of morality and true economy, of retaining the services of these women.

National Union of Teachers' Annual Conference.

EASTER CAMPAIGN, 1922. TORQUAY.

For the ninth year in succession the Women's Freedom League are running a Campaign at this Conference. This year our big Public Meeting will be held on the subject of the

MARRIED WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK

The speakers will be Mrs. Manning, of Cambridge, and Miss Sara Griffiths, of the Rhondda, South Wales. Other speakers will be announced later.

A special educational number of the "Vote" will be published. The help of members and friends attending the Conference is urgently needed to ensure a very successful Campaign, and the expenses which are always heavy must be provided for. Please send contributions and offer of help as soon as possible to

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS, W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Monday, March 27, at 6.30 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Speaker: Miss E. W. Kirby. Subject: "Dr. Elsie Inglis; her Life and Work in this Country and Abroad with the Scottish Women's Hospitals." Illustrated by Lantern Slides.

Monday, April 3, at 3 p.m.—"Fair Committee, at 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

Monday, April 3, at 6.30 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Speaker: Mr. E. G. Clayton. Subject: "Old London—some quiet backwaters and other relics of the past, in a great Capital."

Wednesday, April 5, at 6.30 p.m.—Mid-London Branch Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

Friday, April 7, at 3 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Speaker: Miss Helen Fraser, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Govan Division of Glasgow. Subject: "American Women versus British Women."

Friday, April 28, at 1.30 p.m., at 144, High Holborn.—Meeting of Organization Committee.

Friday, April 28, at 2.30 p.m.—National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Saturday, April 29, at 10 a.m.—Annual Conference, Caxton Hall.

Sunday, April 30—Reception to Delegates, Members, and Friends, arranged by the Mid-London and Hampstead Branches. Time and place to be announced later.

Friday and Saturday, November 24 and 25.—Caxton Hall, Green, White, and Gold Fair.

PROVINCES.

Monday, April 3, at 8 p.m.—**Southend-on-Sea and District.**—Public Lecture, at Metropolitan Academy of Music, 10, London Road, Southend-on-Sea. Speaker and subject to be announced later.

Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m.—**Portsmouth.** Speaker: Dr. Octavia Lewin. Subject: "The Training of Children in Personal Hygiene."

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Wednesday, March 29, at 8 p.m., at Kingsway Hall.—Joint Demonstration of Women's Societies. Speakers: Lady Rhondda, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, &c. Chair: Mrs. Swanwick. Admission Free. Reserved Seats, 1/- (Tickets at this Office).

Wednesday, April 5, at 3 p.m., at St. Michael's Hall, Northwood Road, Upper Clapton. Mrs. Mustard on "Women and Politics."

Wednesday, April 12, at 7.30 p.m.—Hoxton Hall. Mrs. Mustard on "The Aims of the Women's Freedom League."

BRANCH NOTE.

MONTGOMERY BOROUGH.

The Branch has decided to run two members, Mrs. W. R. Williams and Alix M. Clark, for the coming Urban District Council in Newtown. Nominations were handed in on March 16th, and polling takes place on April 1st. It will be an exciting contest of the 47 candidates for the 16 seats.

BEXHILL.

A very interested audience listened to Mrs. How-Martyn, M.Sc., on March 13th, when she spoke on the subject of "Mental Hospitals." The Chair was taken by Mrs. Shoemith. The next speaker at the Sisterhood will be Mrs. H. W. Nevinson who will speak on "My experiences as a Magistrate."

A very successful Debate was held at the Town Hall, Bexhill, March 16th. Mrs. H. W. Nevinson gave a clever address on "Should Marriage terminate a woman's professional career?" The opposer was Mr. H. B. Bowley, Secretary of the Bexhill Debating Society. After the Speeches the meeting was thrown open to the Debate.

Among a crowded audience were several women teachers who entered into the Debate with great interest. Several men members of the Bexhill Debating Society caused much amusement by their arguments. Mrs. Meads, President of the local branch of the Women's Freedom League proved a very efficient chairman.

LADY RHONDDA'S APPEAL.

The Proceedings and Minutes of Evidence taken before The Committee for Privileges is now published, price 9d., and may be obtained at this office.

OUR OPEN COLUMN.

(To the Editor of THE VOTE).

THE BYE ELECTIONS.

Madam,—The bye-elections have given rise to many illuminating comments, all bearing on the coming greater event, the General Election. A Coalition-Liberal journal writes:—"In the interest of the Coalition as a whole there must be a serious re-allocation of seats if the General Election is to be won." The absence of Liberal candidates at Clayton, Camberwell and Wolverhampton, the absence of a Labour candidate at Bodmin, has given rise to renewed assertions that before or behind the scenes, Liberal and Labour will likewise come to an understanding.

What does all this mean? Everybody knows that inter-party arrangements are a matter for party organisers only. The elector is not consulted. When the General Election comes he must vote under conditions prescribed from above. In many constituencies a Coalition-Liberal who believes in Free Trade will, if he wishes to continue the existence of the present Ministry, be forced to vote for a Conservative who advocates Tariff Reform, and vice versa. An Independent Liberal who is opposed to the nationalisation of industry will be constrained, if he wishes to defeat the Lloyd George Administration, to vote for a Labour candidate who is pledged to the socialisation of all means of production and distribution. There will be other important questions at stake concerning home, imperial and foreign policy. But the electors will, to a large extent, be in a position where it is impossible to give expression to their real views, and electoral figures will be an untrustworthy indication of the support of the country behind the main issues of the election.

These inter-party arrangements, discussed day by day for months past, seriously diminish the prestige of the House of Commons. The elector is more and more conscious that he is not a free agent in the chief—it may be the only—opportunity he has in four or five years to take a part in creating the national Parliament. It is not necessary to treat the hard-won franchise with such dignity. With the proportional system there could be, and there would be from one end of the country to the other, candidates of all parties. The electors, not the party organisers, would decide how seats should be filled; not only would the electors have a free choice, but we should learn in terms of fair representation the real strength of opinion behind contending policies. There is no reason, save perhaps the reluctance of party organisers to limit their control of the conditions of the contest, why proportional representation should not be introduced at once. All the official regulations for the conduct of the elections and for the counting of votes are ready. They have been tested in practice, and found quite satisfactory wherever used. There need be no redistribution of seats in the ordinary sense of the term. All that is required is a grouping of existing constituencies. Why cannot this present House of Commons, if it is about to die, pave the way for a fully representative successor by adopting this urgently-needed reform?

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN H. HUMPHREYS, Secretary,
The Proportional Representation Society.

WOMEN AND HOUSECRAFT.

Our advertiser, Miss Gwynne Howell, writes to tell us of the formation of a Housewives' Association, for the purpose of putting household managers in touch with modern labour-saving methods of work, and new devices, appliances, and products to aid the housewife. A consultative bureau has been established for the services of associates, through which enquiries will be answered and advice given in any difficulty, and in connection with which there is a Testing and Experimental Department where the devices, appliances, and products, advocated by manufacturers for the housewife's use, are thoroughly tested under ordinary household conditions. All women interested in home affairs are invited to join the association and make it a real force for the betterment of household working conditions.

A course of Lecture Demonstrations will be held next month, which will include instruction on simple and effective methods to eliminate hard work, household odd jobs, such as mending locks, putting on new washers, repairing electric fuses and bells, putting in a pane of glass, mending tin-ware and blinds, methods of gas economy, the possibility of fuel-less cookery, and women's inventions for the home.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, MANCHESTER.

Women have now been appointed on the Board of Management of the above Hospital. It will be remembered that the Lady Mayoress protested recently against the Board of Management consisting entirely of men. It is interesting to record that nine years ago The Women's Freedom League started a campaign in Manchester for the inclusion of women on this Board of Management, and urged women not to subscribe to it so long as men only were appointed to it.

In Memoriam.

March 14th, at Tharros, Waenfawr, Carnarvon, Jonathan Lynn, Headquarters member of the Women's Freedom League. We desire to offer our sympathy to his wife, our member, Mrs. Edith Lynn, and to his family.

FRIDAY,
MARCH 24,
1922.

THE VOTE

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guild-house, Eccleston Square, S.W. Sunday, March 26th. Miss Maude Royden. 6.30. "An Address to those who think God like us."

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