

The National Council of Women of Great
Britain and Ireland.

JURIES

ENGLAND AND WALES.

COMMON JURIES.

(also known as Petty, Trial and Traverse).

Qualifications (Juries Acts 1825 and 1870): (1) Occupation of premises rated at £30 in London and Middlesex or £20 elsewhere, ownership of real property worth £10 a year or more, of leaseholds £20 a year or more. (2) Burgesses (i.e., registered Municipal Voters) in Boroughs where Quarter Sessions are held. (Juries Emergency Provision Act, 1920).

As married women of 30 years of age or over have Municipal Votes, they are liable to serve on Juries at such Borough Quarter Sessions. They are not liable to serve on County Juries.

Jury Lists.—Jury Lists are in most cases compiled annually by the Overseers of the Parish on Precepts from the Clerks of the Peace; (by Ward Clerks on direction from the Secondary, for the City of London). They must be exposed on the door of every place of worship on the first three Sundays in September, to invite claims for Exemption. They are then sent to the Clerks of the Peace who submit them for revision by the Justices at a Petty Sessional Court in the last week in September.

Jurors Book.—The lists are revised for the JURORS BOOK which is sent to the Sheriff of the County for use for one year from the 1st of January. Sections are extracted for use locally.

Exemptions.—No person whose name is in the Jurors Book can claim to be excused from service on the ground of age or any disqualification or exemption, except for illness. It is therefore necessary to make any claim to the overseers, or the Justices at or before the Revision of the Lists. (Jurors Act, 1870, Section 12).

Exemption after attending.—After service at Assizes or Quarter Sessions a Certificate of exemption can be obtained from the Summoning Officer at a statutory fee of 1/-. This Certificate, being evidence of service exempts from service for 4 years if obtained at Assizes, and for 1 year if obtained at Quarter Session.

General Grounds of Exemption.—The Schedule to the Juries Act, 1870 (33 and 34 Vict. C. 77) gives a long list of persons who may claim exemption before or at the Revision of the Jury lists. It often happens that persons entitled to exemption

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find their names in the Jurors Book, they then have to rely on the good service of the Summoning Officer and his observing the intention of the Act, to excuse persons holding public offices or doing public work. The following are a few of the exemptions, which should be studied from the Schedule:

Public Officials, Peers, M.P's., Priests and Ministers of Religion of all denominations, Officers in full pay, Barristers, Solicitors, Doctors and Chemists if actually practising, County and Borough Councillors, Post office officials, etc.

A Justice of the Peace can claim exemption from any Jury summoned for the Quarter Sessions of the place for the Jurisdiction of which he is a justice. The exemption age limit is 60 (extended to 65 "till the end of the War.").

It is necessary that claims for exemption should be made in time, i.e., at or before the Revision of the Lists by the Justices.

SPECIAL JURIES.

Special Jurors.—From the Jurors Book a list of Special Jurors so marked by the Overseers is extracted. They are persons who are legally entitled to be called Esquire or a person of higher degree, or a Banker or Merchant, or who shall occupy a house rated at £100 in a Town of 20,000 inhabitants or £50 elsewhere, or a farm at £300 or premises other than a farm at £100. A Special Jurymen receives a fee of £1 1s. od. for each cause on which he is sworn. All jurors are liable to serve as Common Jurors.

Summons.—A Jury Summons must be served at least 6 days before the person is required to attend.

Challenges.—The right of a challenge to Jurors is as old as the Jury System. Challenges are of two kinds—"the Challenge Principal" or "Peremptory" for which no cause need be assigned, and Challenge "to the favour or for cause." In Cases of Treason or Felony 35 Peremptory Challenges may be made and more for cause. In Murders and Felonies 20 and more for cause. In misdemeanors and in civil actions Challenges to the favour or for cause are permitted to the whole panel or to persons individually—"to the array and to the Polls." Bias, and that the Juror has been convicted, are good causes.

CORONERS' JURIES.

Coroners' Juries.—The qualification of Coroners' Juries does not depend on the Juries Acts. In practice they are drawn from householders in the vicinity of the place where the inquest is held.

GRAND JURIES.

Grand Juries.—The functions of the Grand Jury were suspended in 1917, and for 6 months after the legal end of the War. Their duty is to enquire whether a *prima facie* case against the Prisoner has been made, to justify his trial by a

Petty Jury They do not see the Prisoner nor hear evidence in his defence. Their full number should be 23. A verdict by 12 is necessary.

Qualifications.—The qualifications for Grand Jurors are not defined, but for the Assizes it is customary for the High Sheriff to select them from Justices of the Peace or persons of position.

Rules of the Supreme Court.

(Women Jurors, 1920).

After the passing of the Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, Rules regulating the service of women on juries were made by the Rule Committee of the Supreme Court. The following are of interest:

A husband and a wife shall not both be summoned to serve on the same occasion.

The number of women summoned on the panel shall be as nearly as possible in the same proportion as the women are to the men in the Jurors' Book. Where possible not less than 14 women shall be on the Jury panel.

(It is apprehended that this rule will be impossible to carry out at Assizes and County Quarter Sessions owing to the small number of women jurors in proportion to men on the County Jurors' Book).

Rule 5. "Upon every jury summons served upon a woman
"there shall appear a notice that she may apply to the
"Summoning Officer for exemption from attendance
"as a juror on account of pregnancy or other feminine
"condition or ailment, provided that such application
"shall be received by the Summoning Officer within
"3 days of the receipt of the jury summons by the
"applicant."

(A medical certificate or affidavit by the juror of unfitness has in the past been sufficient to secure exemption from attendance as a jurymen. The special mention of "feminine condition or ailment" seems superfluous and in a sense objectionable.)

(Power is given by Section 1 b. of the Act to Judges, Recorders and Chairmen of Quarter Sessions to order that the Jury shall be composed of men only or of women only. They may also exempt any woman from service in respect of any case by reason of the nature of the evidence to be given, or of the issue to be tried).

ALMYRA GRAY.

March 1st, 1921.

To be obtained from the Secretary, National Council of Women, Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, price 1d. each or 8d. a dozen post free.

The National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland.

THIS COUNCIL consists of 150 nationally organised societies, which are affiliated, and has 104 Branches in various parts of the country, affiliating in their turn, 1851 local societies. Therefore as one of the most influential and representative bodies of women in the country it is able to bring pressure to bear on the Government, with a view to influencing legislation, especially in matters concerning women and children.

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