

# THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE REVIEW.

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### AT HEADQUARTERS.

The future of the League and the question of the summoning of a Council Meeting have been submitted to the consideration of a Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee, and the action taken on its recommendations will be announced in the next issue of the "Review."

### WOMAN SUFFRAGE

The die is cast, and Great Britain alone of the Great Powers has conferred the parliamentary franchise upon women. By common consent the measure is a leap in the dark. The country has been committed to this duplication of the electorate on no expressed wish of its own, and without any clear comprehension of what it is likely to entail. So far the experiment has been confined to unimportant States or to self-governing portions of the British Empire. No knowledge of its real effects on the fortunes of the people concerned is available, nor have the electorate of Great Britain given this aspect of the question a thought, and even if those effects could be shown to be harmless, the comparison would be vitiated by the difference in the conditions of the respective countries. The responsibilities of Suffrage States hitherto have been local rather than international. Australia rejects conscription. If she decided—the unlikely suggestion is made to emphasize the argument—to withdraw every one of her soldiers from the War, the Allied cause would not, on that account, go under. Owing to the smallness of its population and its freedom from international commitments, the Commonwealth, equally with other Suffrage States, such as Montana and Saskatchewan, can

indulge with more or less impunity in political experiments. Not so Great Britain. Her position in the world imposes upon her heavy responsibilities; more than ever has the course of the War emphasized the importance of her trusteeship, held in conjunction with others, of the cause of civilization. She has challenged the vicious rule of autocracy that set out to restrain the freedom of individual nations to its own advantage, and no less must she be a bulwark against the riot of democracy, which—as can be seen in the case of Russia—may be equally determined to hack its way, by means of murder and pillage, to what it considers to be its goal. On the threshold, therefore, of a new order of things pregnant with great possibilities, the trend of which can only dimly be guessed to day, the interests of Great Britain demand that she should be sure of herself, sure of the ground on which she stands, and that she should bring enhanced knowledge to bear on problems of government, both foreign and domestic.

To what extent the parliamentary enfranchisement of women will achieve this end, the future alone can show. In the case of the five or six million men of the country—electors or potential electors under the old system—whom the War has drawn into the fighting forces, it is safe to say that their outlook on things in general has been widened; they have been face to face with the realities of life, and they can be relied upon, each in his varying measure, to bring the leaven of their experience to bear on their exercise of political power. In a purely male electorate these men would have formed the majority, and their influence, however scattered among constituencies, could hardly have failed to make itself felt. As the electorate will now be, they will constitute a small minority. The War, however, it will be argued, has affected us all; it will



leave no one with precisely the same outlook on life as that which passed muster as the ordinary standard of citizenship before August, 1914. For women, it will be held by some, the War has meant more than it has for men, and consequently their inclusion in the electorate cannot help strengthening it in the direction indicated. Those who have opposed the enfranchisement of women can only hope that this view will be justified. They are sceptical, because throughout the agitation, which has at no time been marked by any spontaneity among women as a whole, but has invariably been the work of a restricted number, they have found that the arguments used in its support have been in the main appeals to self-interest. If, therefore, any store is set by women on the parliamentary vote, it is in danger of being regarded by the majority as a lever in the advancement of their own particular interests. There was no lack among the electors before the War of people who so regarded the vote, and it is precisely this tendency that it was hoped that the men who have passed through the stern experiences of the battlefield would counteract in the future. A further ground for misgiving is to be found in the reluctance of those who supported the movement to submit the question to the deliberate decision of the nation. Objection to the referendum was based on the fear of arousing political controversy in the country at this juncture—a clear admission that public opinion was by no means behind the overwhelming majorities secured in the two Houses of Parliament. For an innovation of such grave potentialities—and in the opinion of its advocates of such paramount importance to the well-being of the State—no period of education regarding its merits for the electorate was to be grudged. But this view was not allowed to prevail. The question was rigidly confined to the political or parliamentary arena, in spite of the fact that it cut athwart party politics, the recognised basis of government in Great Britain. First and last, woman suffrage has been the concern of a mere handful of the people and of the politicians. All attempts to take it out of the control of the latter failed. It becomes, therefore, part of the Constitution without in any way being broad based upon the people's will. At best it is a political move, and its effect on the national welfare none can foretell.

For good or for ill, the women of Great Britain have now the parliamentary franchise. The fact that even on the admission of Suffragists they cannot be regarded as adequately trained for the exercise of their responsibility should give the nation seriously to think. If there is one lesson that the War ought to have taught us, it is that government must now be regarded as something very distinct from the former conception of it as the art of catching votes. A man's qualification for a Ministerial post was judged mainly by his supposed capacity to gain adherents for the party in power. The outbreak of war found a Government formed on these lines in office. Considerations of prudence prompted the sharing of responsibility between the chief parties, and a Coalition Ministry was set into being, again with sole reference to oratorical pretensions or vested Ministerial interests. It has

been necessary for the nation to pass through a period of grave crisis, in order that this prostitution of the highest trust that the nation has in its power to bestow should be, at least in part, abolished. To-day we talk of a Business Government. Analysed, the expression means that the men who form the Government should be chosen with some reference to their capacity for the work with which they are to be entrusted, and for no less worthy reason. Faced with a situation that called for serious effort, the people insisted that the whole elaborate edifice of government built up by the politicians for their own particular benefit should be demolished, and that knowledge and administrative ability should be made a qualification for office. But a Government reflects in a large measure the political alertness of the electorate. How, then, about the future? The experience of the War even in the case of those who have stayed at home, but far more the quickened perception of essentials gained by the men who have been in closer touch with realities, might be trusted to make short shrift of politicians who hope to cling to the old order. Is it to be that these latter are to find support among new electors whose ignorance has been fed on statements that the vote was to be won for the promotion of their self-interests? For the well-being of the country we hope not. But the danger is there, and ought not to be ignored. Suffrage societies have been exercised in mind as to the form that their future activities should now take. If they are sincere in their protestations of patriotism, their first acts will be to give the lie to all the statements that have been scattered broadcast in the endeavour to win support for woman suffrage. Let them point out that the vote carries with it a serious responsibility, that it is not to be used merely to secure an increase in wages, and to carry any chance demagogue to power who fixes upon some item of freak legislation as a panacea for all the ills from which the country is suffering. Reconstruction is now a familiar word; but Europe as well as England has to be fashioned anew, and the peace of the world, on which all hopes are set, requires that our foreign relations, our international and imperial responsibilities, should be as carefully and as wisely regulated as our own domestic affairs. If the country is to have business Governments in future, it must have a business House of Commons; and to secure this there must be appreciation among the electorate of the "business" aspects they require in their representatives. But this will never be achieved if one-half of the electorate is to be continually reminded that it is as women that they have been given the vote, and that it should be as women that they use it, and for their own advantage.

Now that woman suffrage has been granted, it becomes the bounden duty of all who have the interests of Great Britain at heart to see that the name is abolished from the electoral vocabulary. The interests of the country come first, and any Parliamentary candidate who would put self-interest—his own or that of others—should be made to appreciate the new spirit that it is to, be hoped will actuate the now enlarged electorate.

## NOTES AND NEWS.

### The Reform Bill.

The National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage, as has been indicated above, is prepared to bow to constituted authority. With the passage through the House of Lords of Clause 4 of the Representation of the People Bill, and with the rejection of the Referendum proposal, its members recognise that in ordinary circumstances the cause which they have championed has to be regarded as lost. They will not, however, fail to watch with keen interest the progress of the controversy over Proportional Representation. The subject comes very close home to them. In common with Woman Suffrage it was left to the free vote of Parliament. The one was accepted, but the other rejected by the House of Commons. In the Upper House the verdict in regard to the enfranchisement of women has been endorsed, but in regard to Proportional Representation it has been reversed.

### The Lords and the Commons.

Now there is good reason to suppose that, if one consideration more than another weighed with the House of Lords in determining their attitude towards Woman Suffrage, it was the fear, or at least the apparent hopelessness, of a conflict with the House of Commons. But almost immediately afterwards there was a reaction against this timorous view. The House went back on the policy of avoiding a conflict with the House of Commons, and challenged the latter on the subject of Proportional Representation. The result has yet to be disclosed. Whatever happens the line of reasoning that was probably responsible for turning the scales against Woman Suffrage has been shown to be valueless. The House of Lords, freed from a quasi-Government threat, has shown no hesitation in challenging the House of Commons on a matter directly affecting the latter's constitution. It remains to be seen whether the Bill is to be "killed" in consequence.

### Woman Suffrage and Democracy.

Suffragists, according to their official organ, the *Common Cause*, have satisfied themselves that Anti-Suffragists are really wicked people, who have been bent on "resisting democracy." When reference has been made in this REVIEW, for instance, to Socialism, "What they, like the Kaiser, are out against," we are told, "is not, in truth, Socialism, but democracy," and there follow many excellent generalisations on democracy in 1918 as an overwhelming force. We confess never to have set much store on mere words, and whether our Suffragist friends like to call the present régime in Russia socialistic or democratic, we admit to being "out against it." That régime, as we understand it, in its essentials stands for the convincing of a people by murder, pillage and general terrorism that a certain definite policy is good for them, and in any case the only one that they are going to be allowed to adopt. If a Constituent Assembly does not subscribe off-hand to the "red" doctrines in question, it has to be forcibly dissolved. Anti-Suffragists have never wavered in their contention that opinion on the subject of Woman Suffrage in Great Britain is divided, and that on a question of this nature the principles of democracy, or government by consent, require that the views of the people should be properly canvassed. As things are, the enfranchisement of women has been enacted

over the heads of the electorate, in the approved Bolshevik style, and Suffragists, whose sense of humour has never been conspicuous, have the while quoted that excellent German doctrine, which is being cited to such good purpose in the case of Poland and Courland, that the principle of self-determination must be restricted to a few packed bodies "organised for political, educational, industrial, social or philanthropic purposes" (*Common Cause*, January 11th, p. 501). But the Germans at least refrain from declaring that it is their opponents who are out against democracy.

### Non Tali Auxilio.

In these pages it has invariably been urged that, if Woman Suffrage has to come, it ought to be as the expressed wish of the majority of the people. With the critical times that are, without doubt, ahead of us, it becomes the more imperative that no step should be deliberately taken that is likely in any way to impair the solidarity of the nation. It may be that the enfranchisement of women will most wondrously cement all classes and sections. On the other hand, if the vote is to be put to even a few of the purposes for which women have been urged to claim it, then there is the strongest possibility of such a revulsion of feeling against Woman Suffrage as has been recorded in other Suffrage States. The best safeguard against disappointment would have been to make sure that the Parliamentary vote was given to women only as a result of the expressed resolve of the majority of the electorate. This precaution has not been adopted. In the period of reconstruction, when the men who have saved the Empire on the battlefields of Europe and Asia and at sea are back again in this country, they may bring to bear on the course of affairs views diametrically opposed to those of the stay-at-homes who have not been able to rid themselves of the incubus of politics. If they find themselves thwarted by the dead weight of an inexperienced element in the electorate, they will be the less inclined to brook opposition when they reflect that the innovation is altogether without the authority of public opinion behind it. The country faces the future committed to an experiment that has had neither justice nor intelligence to commend it, and the time of tragedy will be when this fact is appreciated.

### The Blow to the United States.

Something of the despair which we may imagine broods over the friends of the Entente in Russia at this time will have overtaken Anti-Suffragists in Great Britain who have found time to reflect upon the blow which at first sight may seem to have been dealt to the Anti-Suffrage cause in the United States. We can but hope, however, that Anti-Suffragists in that country will take to heart the warning contained in our own disillusionment here. They have benefited from the fact that during the last three years they have not been debarred, as have Anti-Suffragists in this country, from political action. There has been abundant opportunity of seeing how Suffragists would seek to turn the war to their own ends, and to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Much has been made of President Wilson's conversion to the Federal Amendment. No less than the Suffragist-Socialist-Pacifist success in the New York State election, the incident will be abundantly exploited. But the United States, unlike Great Britain, are fortunate in having their Constitution carefully hedged about with safeguards. It cannot be changed merely by a stamped vote in one Chamber, while the Second Chamber lacks the courage to



challenge the verdict. The Federal Amendment, it is true, removes the issue largely from the decision of the people to that of easily swayed Legislatures, and for that reason it is eagerly courted by Suffragists. Their opponents, however, will know that the best form of defensive is a vigorous offensive, and will not wait to have their position rushed.

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### Woman Suffrage in America.

Although much is being made of the victory in New York State by American Suffragists, and the decision of Congress to allow the question of Woman Suffrage to be submitted as an amendment to the National Constitution is claimed as an immediate effect of that victory, it may be doubted whether the movement has made any real progress among the people. Suffragist successes in the past have been confined to Western States, where experimental legislation is in high favour. New York State has a large foreign-born population, and, as recorded in these pages last month, the Suffragist victory has coincided with a marked triumph for Socialism. In the *International Woman Suffrage News* the following naive admission is made:—"The Socialists polled the largest vote in their history, and it is claimed that nearly all of it was cast for Woman Suffrage." As a matter of fact the Suffrage amendment was defeated in the rest of the State, but New York City gave it a majority of 92,696. At the same time the Socialists in the City polled 107,805 more votes than on any previous occasion, and it is safe to infer that without this accession of strength to Socialism Woman Suffrage would have been defeated. Pacifism, it must be remembered, is also strong in this Eastern State, with its large proportion of German-born voters. All these cross-currents have to be taken into consideration, to say nothing of the \$700,000 which the Suffragists admit that the campaign cost. Just before New York State went Suffragist Ohio and Maine rejected the proposal by large majorities, and the fact remains that only one State has adopted Woman Suffrage in the last five years.

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### Quo Vadis?

People belonging to rival schools of political thought in Great Britain will do well these days to eschew bickerings, and to devote more time to the study of political movements the world over. It sounds strange in the face of contemporary events in Russia and of the first beginning of ferment nearer home to find the official organ of the chief Suffragist Society dismissing Socialism as simply meaning, "whenever the word is seriously used . . . some particular theory as to the distribution of wealth." The country will pay dearly for a shibboleth, if the expression "government of the people by the people for the people" is to stand by the interpretation now placed upon it in Petrograd. When Abraham Lincoln coined the phrase for a comparatively small community, the members of which had all had practically equal opportunities in life, he certainly never intended that it should mean government of the people by the more ignorant among them to the prejudice of the rest. The war will have compelled us to revise many preconceived ideas, but it is to be hoped that it will also strengthen the resolve that the government of the country shall be conducted on more enlightened, more expert lines. If the flooding of the electorate by women's votes has the effect of bringing this about, well and good; but it will be a miracle should this happen without any conscious effort on the part of those who are able to read the signs of the times.

### AFTER THE DEBATE.

By JOHN MASSIE.

The *Daily News* is a journal which might be described, in brewers' tied-house phraseology, as the "Suffragists' Entire." But sometimes, with the Suffragist as well as with the literal liquor, the proverb is fulfilled: *in vino veritas*. On the day after the feast—that is, the defeat of Lord Loreburn's amendment—the *Daily News* commented in a leader on "The Final Victory," and broke loose into the truth as follows:—"The end is in many ways characteristic of a series of battles which have very rarely been fought and still more rarely decided upon the merits of the main issue. There was scarcely any pretence among the Peers last night as to the reasons which determined their decision. They have passed Women's Suffrage not because the majority of them believe in it, but because they desire to avoid a conflict with the Commons which could only end in humiliating defeat."

But the sauce for the goose suits the gander also. What was the reason of the stampede of votes in the House of Commons after they had thrown two Woman Suffrage Bills in succession? "There was no pretence about it." The principle which they had rejected they now passed by 385 votes to 55, not because the majority of them believed in it, but because they made an excuse of "women's contribution to the war," in order to get out of the way a troublesome question that threatened to make hay of political parties in every constituency, and because some of them, quite frankly, feared the recrudescence of the female lawlessness which, simply because the lawless are female and take advantage of their sex, it is difficult for men (still, to their credit, actuated by chivalrous traditions) effectively to punish and restrain. Perhaps, in the coming years, when female voters are harassed by the same female lawlessness, they will, like Sentimental Tommy, "find a way" to deal appropriately with their own sex. And what is the logic of the "women's contribution to the war"? Mr. Asquith practically threw up his brief when he expressly excepted from this contribution "service in the field," and the supreme sacrifice. Lord Haldane, in the debate, pleaded that women had "perished under fire and bombardment just as men had." Far be it from me to think or speak unworthily of the dangers faced by nurses under the murderous brutality, calculated and heedless, of our lawless foes. But it is unnecessary to point out that these are not the methodised dangers of the combatant in fierce conflict on the battlefield. Women as well as men and children have "perished under bombs and shells" in air raids, but we do not advance such suffering as a claim to the vote. To argue from service to government is, of course, completely illogical. A big employer with Suffragist views once said, "I would not let my employees govern my works, but I would let them govern the country." This was a wholesale surrender of the argument from service to governmental power, which now for the first time is held to be conclusive for the franchise.

A similar "sort of an argument" was put forward by Lord Selborne in a speech which has been loudly lauded in the Suffragist press: "It was said by Lord Loreburn (he remarked) that men had indescribably a greater share of suffering than women. No statement had ever surprised him (Lord Selborne) more. (Hear, hear.) Could the physical suffering of a man be compared for a moment with the anguish of soul of the mother who lost her son or the wife who lost her husband? To him there appeared to be no

comparison." Nor is there; they ought not to be compared. Lord Loreburn was comparing physical suffering, and was therefore on unimpeachable ground. Experience would teach Lord Selborne not to belittle the agony of the wounded and the maimed and the shattered in the trenches and on the battlefield. Why should he also belittle the "anguish of soul" in a father who has lost a dearly loved son; it may be his only son? Suffragist advocates, at a loss for an argument, often argue as if fathers and husbands had no feeling in comparison with their wives and daughters. The unassailable fact is that men also have "anguish of soul," and have to bear the "indescribably greater share" of bodily anguish besides. That is the fact; but sentiment and not fact defeated Lord Loreburn.

Well, well, the Suffragist section of the women of the country, eluding all test as to whether they are the majority or not, and exploiting the war with the cry of unity when they themselves have created the division, are getting their way by the aid of sentiment, cowardice and political expediency. But at the same time they are losing their one fascinating excitement. When an English Suffragist lady, a neighbour of mine, was, not long ago, talking glowingly about "the vote," an Australian lady friend, already in possession of that treasure, said quietly to her "Well, my dear, when you have got it you won't find it as interesting as you expect." And an emotional Suffragist student at one of the Oxford women's colleges, lately exclaimed to one of her bosom friends, "When we have got the vote, what *will* there be left to do?"

### DEPUTATION TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

A deputation of women on behalf of those who signed the Memorial initiated by the League was received at the House of Lords on Monday, January 14th, by Lord Loreburn, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Balfour, Lord Bryce and Lord Sydenham. The deputation was introduced by Mrs. Humphry Ward, and consisted of the following:—

The Countess Bathurst, V.A.D. Nurse; The Lady Cheylesmore, Belgian Relief Work; The Lady Raglan, President of S.S.F.A.; The Lady Robson, Red Cross and Canteen Work; The Lady Sydenham, Various War Committees; Mrs. Reginald Blomfield, Prisoners of War Depot; Miss Georgina H. C. Frere, London War Pensions and Soldiers' Clubs; Mrs. Hackett, Head Supervisor, Munitions Works, Organiser for the National Federation of Women Workers; Mrs. Latter, Certificated Matron, Head of V.A.D. Hospital; Miss A. J. Lindsay, Central Prisoners of War Committee; Mrs. Massie, Belgian Relief Committee, etc.; Miss Mary A. Pilliet, M.B., Medical Officer, B.R.C.S., Public Health Department, L.C.C.; Miss M. C. Pook, Hospital Staff Nurse; Mrs. Humphry Ward, Writer, Evening Play Centres, Chairman Local Government Advancement Committee; Miss Dorothy Ward, Hon. Welfare Supervisor, Herts. Women's War Agricultural Committee; Mrs. Wethered, Rescue Work, Member National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases; Mrs. Jeyes, Metropolitan Committee for War Savings (Women's Auxiliary Committee), Free Buffet for Soldiers and Sailors, Paddington Station.

MRS. WARD, in her introductory speech, mentioned that telegrams of sympathy with the objects of the deputation,

and regret at being unable to attend, had been received from the Duchess of Montrose, the Countess of Northbrook, the Countess of Coventry, and others. She pointed out that the object of the deputation, which had been got up with great difficulty at very short notice, was the same as that of the memorialists, namely, to urge on the House of Lords the injustice of passing Woman Suffrage into law without consulting the women of the country themselves upon the matter, and to point out that the new municipal register of women electors provided an "easy and democratic means of ascertaining the opinion of women" by means of a Referendum. Mrs. Ward dwelt on the remarkably representative character of the Memorial, the signatures embracing every conceivable kind of war-worker—Heads of Hospitals, whether Red Cross Commandants or Matrons, Nurses (professional and V.A.D.), munition-makers, canteen workers, officials and members of County War Committees (Pensions, S.S.F.A., Red Cross, War Agricultural, Prisoners', etc.), and many women employed direct by the Government. An enormous number were those of young women, giving the best of their health and strength to the service of the country, and proving beyond any doubt that amongst women themselves there was a very marked cleavage of opinion.

MRS. LINDSAY spoke as one who before the war had gone all over the country as a political organiser. She declared that the women's vote would be regarded as a valuable reinforcement by those men who wished to use it for Socialistic purposes.

MRS. WETHERED spoke from the point of view of one deeply interested and experienced in questions of sex morality. She held that the vote of a certain large class of women would be manipulated by unscrupulous men—and unscrupulous women too; and in view of the lamentable absence, at any rate amongst certain people, of the sense of responsibility towards children, she maintained that it was an added danger to the community to create a large number of thoughtless and irresponsible women-voters.

MRS. HACKETT spoke as one who had come in contact during the course of her daily work for some years past with large numbers of working women in industrial districts. She spoke gravely of the danger of the vote being used simply as a revolutionary instrument by numbers of women *over-thirty*, who were entirely given over to a bitter revolutionary propaganda.

LADY RAGLAN said she belonged to a large club, of which the membership was practically entirely composed of the wives of naval and military officers. She had endeavoured to find out what the general view was amongst these ladies as to conferring the suffrage on women at this time, and she found a practically unanimous feeling of strong protest against its being done at all, or even contemplated until *after* the war.

DR. MARY PILLIET spoke from the experience of one whose duty it had been, in her Public Health work, to visit the homes of many hundreds of married working women every year for some years past. She had been greatly struck by the fact that the overwhelming majority of these women not only did not desire the vote, but actively deprecated the bestowal of it on themselves.

THE COUNTESS OF BATHURST, LADY CHEYLESMORE, MRS. LATTER and MRS. REGINALD BLOMFIELD having also spoken, the Peers present thanked the members of the deputation for their valuable testimony, and the deputation then withdrew.



## THE INFORMATION BUREAU.

415, Oxford Street, W.

A final meeting of the Bureau Committee and the working party, presided over by the Chairman of the Committee, was held, by kind permission of the Misses Frere, at 67, Westbourne Terrace, on the afternoon of January 14th. In opening the meeting, the Chairman said that the Committee had wished to get together as many as possible of the workers for a meeting before the final dissolution of the Bureau as a going concern; but before proceeding to other business it was her pleasant duty to read to them a gracious message that had been received from Her Majesty the Queen through Lady Lawley. As the Women's Patriotic Bureau had been affiliated to Queen Mary's Needlework Guild it was necessary to inform that body of the closing of the Bureau and to inquire whether or not the workers would be allowed to retain their badges. Miss Frere had made the necessary inquiries, and the following reply had been received from Lady Lawley:—

Queen Mary's Needlework Guild,  
Friary Court,

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.  
10th December, 1917.

DEAR MISS FRERE,—I am extremely sorry to hear from you that the Women's Patriotic Bureau Workroom is to be closed. I regret it for every reason, and it certainly means a very great loss to me, for I always know where to turn in any difficulty, and when I want any special work well and quickly done.

Will you please convey to your Committee my special thanks for all the help they have always given me in the work of the Guild.

I am desired by the Queen to say that Her Majesty would like the large certificate to be presented to Miss Blenkinsop as a memento from her, and she hopes that the members will continue to wear their badges, as she feels sure she will always be able to count on their sympathy and interest in the Q.M.N.G. as long as the war lasts.

(Signed) ANNIE LAWLEY,  
Hon. Sec.

The Chairman said that as she considered these gracious words to be in the nature of a personal message from Her Majesty to the workers who had received the badge of the Guild, she had had copies made of the letter, and each of the 40 badged workers of the Bureau would receive a copy. With regard to the disposition of the large certificate, everyone would rejoice that it was to be the property of Miss Blenkinsop, than whom no one had a better right to it. It must never be forgotten that the success of the Bureau was entirely due to Miss Blenkinsop; it was her original invention in the first place. When the League was engaged in political work in the far-off pre-war days, Miss Blenkinsop had the excellent idea that there should be some place where members of the League could meet one another and exchange views and hear what was going on with regard to the cause, where they could be brought into contact with some of their leaders, where they could see the latest books and papers on both sides, and where meetings and discussions could take place. And all these things, and many more, did happen. The room in Oxford Street became a most useful place and much good work emanated from there. Many most interesting meetings took place there; many distinguished speakers gave lectures; there was a debating society; a small, but valuable library of good reference books was formed. With the outbreak of war, however, these things had to be changed; all political work of every kind had to be discontinued. Then came the question as to what

should be done with the Bureau. This problem was solved by Miss Blenkinsop, with her usual resourcefulness and initiative. She suggested the change of name that was afterwards adopted, and she enlisted the services of the members in various kinds of helpful and patriotic work. For the Bureau was not only a workroom where garments were made for the wounded; its activities, especially in the earlier days of the war, were many and various, and there was hardly any charitable undertaking for ourselves or our Allies that Bureau had not done work for at some time or another. To mention only a few—the Queen's appeal for socks and belts, the Serbian Relief Fund, the Help to Belgian Soldiers Fund, the Croix Rouge Française, gifts for Belgian soldiers at the front, the great Belgian hospital at Bourbourg, various branches of the Navy, Soldiers and Sailors wives and families, and hospitals without number, to say nothing of the hut presented to the Y.M.C.A., with much of its equipment. And with regard to the Y.M.C.A. the Chairman said that she had a proposal to make that she wished to lay before the meeting for the consideration of the Bureau workers. There had been many pleasant friendships made at the Bureau, and it had been said to her that it was a pity these should not be continued in some form. The Y.M.C.A. offered a solution of the problem. There was work enough and of so many kinds in that magnificent organisation to give suitable employment to almost everyone who would undertake it. Of all other organisations this was the one that was of the greatest help to the men in every way, there was no side of their lives that it did not touch—physical, mental or spiritual, and it set out to supply their every possible need from bootlaces to Bibles, from ragtime to the highest spiritual consolation. The general public was, as a rule, only aware of a few of its activities, and only those who were privileged to see some of its inner workings knew how vast were its ramifications. Why should not the Bureau workers form themselves into a small Guild under the name of the Patriotic Bureau Guild of the Y.M.C.A.? Each worker could be given work that suited her best, she could promise a certain amount of time and the whole number could meet together once a quarter to talk over their doings and exchange views; there could be a small subscription of half a crown a quarter, and Miss Barnes had most generously consented, in the event of such a guild being formed, to undertake the duties of honorary secretary and treasurer. A vote would be taken on this suggestion at the close of the meeting. The speaker went on to say that it had been hoped that Mr. F. J. Chamberlain would have been able to come and address the meeting, and that he would be greatly pleased if such a guild could be formed, as he was sure it would be a very valuable working unit of the Y.M.C.A. She had, however, just received a letter from Mr. Chamberlain, which she read to the meeting as follows:

DEAR MRS. HARRISON,—I cannot tell you how sorry I am that I am unable to attend the meeting this afternoon. . . . Will you please express to your colleagues and friends our great sense of indebtedness to them for their constant and generous interest in our work; give them our assurance that the huts provided by them have been of the very greatest service, and have been and are being very largely used. We are most anxious to secure the continued co-operation of your members and friends. I hope Mrs. Hatfield will be at your meeting, and will be able to tell you of ways in which your ladies will be able to co-operate in our work, not only with the Red Triangle library, but in other departments. I think it would be a splendid thing if it were possible for the Society to have its circle of workers co-operating under the sign of the Red Triangle, meeting from time to time to confer re their

experiences, and to extend their service for us wherever possible. I the more regret my enforced absence, as I was anxious to express our special indebtedness to Miss Blenkinsop for her distinguished work for us. She has given herself wholeheartedly, not only to the interests of your Society, but to the work we have been fortunate enough to attach her to here. Had it been at all possible, I should have been present and wished to say these things.

(Signed) F. J. CHAMBERLAIN.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. George King, then made a financial statement showing a balance in hand of £12 18s. 2d. on the Patriotic Bureau account. On the side of the general account there would be, when sundry effects had been realised, a balance of £18 os. 8d., and the total would amount to something like £30 18s. 10d.

Miss Blenkinsop said that about £70 was still wanting to complete the sum needed for and promised towards the second hut the Bureau had undertaken to provide for the Y.M.C.A.

The Chairman said that the Committee had decided that any surplus from the general fund after all necessary expenses had been paid, was to be given to the Hut Fund; also, that the donors of furniture given to the Information Bureau when it was first set up, had been asked what they would like done with these things. In all such cases the reply had been that the things should be given to the Y.M.C.A., and this had already been done.

Miss Lily Frere suggested that the Patriotic Fund and the General Funds should be amalgamated and handed over as a whole to the Hut Fund, and that such subscriptions as had not been paid up to the end of the working period of the Bureau should also be paid into the same fund. She requested that a vote be taken on the whole question, this resulted in an almost unanimous vote in favour of handing over the whole of the money to the Hut Fund.

Mrs. Hatfield, Superintendent of the women workers of the Y.M.C.A., addressed the meeting. She said that she was always glad to have the help of ladies in her work. Perhaps the best known branch of the work was the Canteen, and she had often great difficulty in getting enough workers for the night and early morning shifts, which, however, were not so onerous as might be expected.

She went on to speak of the immense variety of openings for work in the different departments of the Y.M.C.A., especially in connection with the library both at home and abroad, and of the need for ladies who were able to go and live abroad to superintend the huts. They were going to set up huts in Holland and in Italy, some for the Italian soldiers and some for the English Tommies at present in Italy. If there were any ladies who spoke Italian she would be glad to hear from them. The work abroad was so interesting and many ladies preferred it to work in England. There were the various hostels, some for discharged soldiers, some for the friends of the wounded. This kind of work was at present for the most part in France, but arrangements were being made in Holland for the friends of interned prisoners. There were also ladies needed for the kiosks in different parts of London, and these ladies had to possess a large amount of general knowledge, as the men asked them all sorts of questions, not only about their routes to and from London, but about the different ways to get about London itself. There was work in the photographic department for ladies who could write in a very small, neat hand on the edges of the films. They were hoping very shortly to have a training college for ladies who wished to qualify for headships in huts and canteens, and it was to be opened some

time during January by the Princess Helena Victoria. Many ladies had not enough confidence to undertake the duties required of them without seeing some of the practical work and this college was to help them to get over this. The course was for a fortnight, the student living in, and the cost was the very moderate sum of 5s. per day.

The Y.M.C.A. had just started Social Rooms. One had been opened near Waterloo Station. Here the men could bring their female relatives and friends, and ladies were wanted to organise entertainments and to preside over the whole thing. Another room of the kind had been opened at Ciro's, which the Y.M.C.A. had taken over and was a great success. Almost all the work done by ladies for the Y.M.C.A. was voluntary, and ladies who volunteer for work abroad must sign on for four months and pay all their own expenses of travelling and cost of living.

Mrs. Hatfield said that she had only mentioned a few of the branches of the Y.M.C.A. work in which ladies were engaged. She would be very happy to see any of the workers who would like to call on her at 13, Russell Square between the hours of 11 and 1, and she and her staff would give them any information and help as to the most suitable kind of work they might undertake. If the proposed guild were formed, she thought it would be a very useful unit of the Y.M.C.A.

Miss Blenkinsop said that with regard to the library work there was hardly any branch mentioned by Mrs. Hatfield that it did not touch. At the beginning of the month they had sent off no less than three tons of books: one ton to Mesopotamia, one ton to Salonika, and one ton to France. They also sent parcels of books to prisoners of war and to the huts in France, Italy, Salonika, and other parts of the world: to the huts and camps in England, to the men in hospitals, and so on. The library work was increasing; the shop in the Tottenham Court Road was so full that an overflow depot had been taken at Holborn Viaduct. Helpers in the library were greatly needed—packers, and also book menders. Book-mending was work that could be well done at home, and it would be of great use if workers could take home so many books one week and bring them back the next. To mend a book was practically to give a book to a soldier, as large numbers of the books sent in to the library were in very bad repair. Instruction in book-mending is given at the library in the Tottenham Court Road.

The Chairman, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mrs. Hatfield, said that the meeting was much indebted to her for the valuable information and interesting account she had given of the ladies' work in connection with the Y.M.C.A., and went on to say that she was sure that the Bureau workers would see from Mrs. Hatfield's address that there was ample scope for their energies. Personally she, the Chairman, could think of no finer field of work than this which had proved itself of such real value to the men on active service.

She would now take the vote upon the formation of the Guild, and desired that all those who were not in favour of the proposal should signify their dissent by a show of hands. To this there was no response, whereupon the proposal for the formation of the Guild, as outlined in the Chairman's address, was moved from the chair, and on a show of hands was carried *nomine contradicente*. The Chairman thereupon declared the Guild to be established under the title of "The Patriotic Bureau Guild of the Y.M.C.A.," and 16 members were at once enrolled.

A vote of thanks to the Misses Frere for lending their house for the meeting was then moved by Mrs. Taylor and carried unanimously.



## THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

It has been suggested that many readers of the ANTI-SUFFRAGE REVIEW would like to have fuller reports than appeared in the daily Press of the speeches made in favour of Lord Loreburn's amendment to omit the woman franchise clauses in the Representation of the People Bill. A beginning is made in this issue, with Lord Loreburn's speech on January 9th.

EARL LOREBURN: The purpose of the Amendment is to stop that part of the Bill which bestows a vote upon women for the Imperial Parliament. I desire to lay emphasis on the fact that it is in the case of the Imperial Parliament that I object to their introduction.

My view simply is that it is not in the true interests of the State, or in the true interests of women themselves, any more than of men, that they should have power in Imperial matters. The claim that is made for them is that they should take part in electing Members to the House of Commons. It is said that women are unjustly treated by the House of Commons, and that the only real protection that can be given to them is the vote. I would ask your Lordships to consider that for a very few moments. The House of Commons is in this country principally responsible for making all our laws, and also for superintending their administration. As regards the administration of the laws, whether by Courts of Justice or by the Departments which are charged with the administrative work, I have not myself heard any complaint that there is unfairness towards women. I am sure of this, that in the Courts of Law with which I am familiar a more merciful view is taken in regard to women than in regard to men. It is in matters of administration that this complaint really is made.

[Lord Loreburn then dealt *seriatim* with a number of questions in regard to which the laws are said to be unjust to women.]

The House of Commons has far wider and greater powers than those which affect our own country exclusively. The House of Commons prescribes, in theory at all events, our foreign policy. In practice, for the time, it has allowed that control to be committed into the hands of secret councils which supersede the House of Commons, but this is war time. The House of Commons, however, has the power; and when peace comes I am perfectly sure that it will hold the reins very tight indeed, much tighter than it did before the war in respect of matters of foreign policy. That House also has control in the same sense over the Crown Colonies. It decides issues as regards India; and although not in theory required by our Constitution to sanction a declaration of war or the making of peace, yet whenever it chooses to assert itself it can control both.

What this Bill does is to add something like, roundly, six or seven millions of women to the electorate. The age limit of 30 is illusory and illogical, because I do not see how you can pretend, if women of 30 and men of 30 are entitled to vote, that women of 21 should be excluded when men of 21 are admitted; for women of 21 are older than men of 21, as everyone must know from his own experience. It is merely a fictitious and an artificial and temporary expedient. This Bill gives this enormous number of voters, who in a little time will become a majority of the entire electorate, the power over Imperial policy, the power over questions hereafter of peace or war, the most solemn questions that can affect the destinies of the nation.

It is needless to argue upon a subject of this kind, because it is a question of experience and opinion. I think that it is inexpedient that these things should be in feminine rather than in masculine hands. No great State has ever done anything like this, even after deliberation. The arguments that I hear advanced and disputed on both sides in this House and elsewhere as to what has been done by this or that State of the American Union, or by other Provinces or States in America or Australia or Canada are wholly beside the purpose, because the States in question are States which have exclusively an authority in regard to what I call, for the sake of brevity, domestic or internal matters. This Bill is to hand over the

control of the House of Commons—varying in different parts of the world, but always able to affect the destinies more or less of all the British Empire, over one quarter of the human race—in a manner which I will in a moment describe. His Majesty's Dominions and India and the Crown Colonies have nothing to do with our internal self-government; but a quarter of the human race, which is under the sceptre of the King, have a great deal to say as to the control of the Imperial policy which affects them all. They have, therefore, a very great deal to feel in regard to the question of handing over the present powers to feminine instead of masculine hands.

I have read a good deal of the literature and a good many of the speeches, speeches conceived in high tone, in favour of the movement, to which I am sorry to say I cannot assent. But I would ask your Lordships whether this is not a just criticism. All of them, or nearly all of them, are devoted to the right and propriety of voting for the House of Commons in respect to internal and domestic affairs. I may be wrong, but I think these two things have not been kept separate, as they ought to be. I can perfectly understand a man saying that women ought to have a right to vote upon all the questions that affect our own internal and domestic life—land, liquor, divorce, marriage, and everything else—but drawing the line when it comes to the bigger Imperial things. My education on this subject may have been imperfect, but I have never yet heard an argument put forward on the footing that these other Imperial things ought to be treated in the same way. In those circumstances I think we have not the right to make this vast change in our present condition.

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At what time is this matter brought forward? There is nothing more certain than that the House of Commons has far more to do than it can possibly accomplish. One of the great troubles that we have had in this country has been the pressure of business in the House of Commons, which has put back Bill after Bill, and which has hindered the control of the House of Commons over not only foreign affairs, but also over domestic affairs. That is sure to be remedied. Whether it comes in the form—as I think it probably will come—of what is usually called "Home Rule all round" or not, it is quite certain that a great part of the work of the House of Commons will be delegated, or devolved, to some other body of men. That is the time—close at hand, certain to come soon—when all matters of this kind can be conclusively settled. In the meanwhile I believe that a request has been made to your Lordships which is beyond all the precedents in Parliamentary history—without consulting the people, without raising the question, without having a single Member of the House of Commons whose election has been upon this subject—a request has been made to pass in the time of war, when men are thinking of other things and when all their feelings are moved and disturbed by every kind of consideration, a proposal which, whether it is right or wrong—I think it is wrong in regard to Imperial things—must be one of the most serious decisions that has ever been arrived at in this House. I therefore beg to move the Amendment standing in my name on the Paper.

### THE HASTINGS BRANCH.

In forwarding its report for 1917 the Hastings Branch announces that it has used the occasion of its annual meeting, held on January 25th, to decide to wind up the Branch. The report records the work done during the past year, which shows that in spite of all difficulties the organisation was kept going, thanks to the good services of the members of the committee.

### THE CHAIN GUILD.

Lady Griselda Cheape reports:—

During January the Chain Guild has sent socks to Mrs. Romilly for the Royal Scots Guards. In February we shall be working for temperance.

Further particulars of the Guild will gladly be furnished by—

LADY GRISELDA CHEAPE,  
Strathtyrum, St. Andrews.