EAST LONDON FEDERATION OF THE SUFFRAGETTES.

# FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

ADOPTED BY THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD IN THE BOW BATHS HALL, JANUARY 4TH, 1915.



PAMPHLET

LONDON: 400 OLD FORD ROAD, BOW, E.

1915

CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC FAWCETT COLLECTION

JOIN THE

Calcutta House **Old Castle Street** London E1 7NT

# EAST LONDON FEDERATION OF THE SUFFRAGETTES.

CENTRAL OFFICE: 400 OLD FORD ROAD, BOW, E.

TELEPHONE: 1787 EAST.

COLOURS : PURPLE, WHITE, GREEN AND RED.

# An Organisation mainly composed of Working Women, whose object is :

- To secure the Parliamentary Vote for every Woman over 21;
- To raise the economic status of Women; and
- To improve the social and economic organisation of the community.

The Minimum Subscription is 1d. a month. All Members are asked to contribute to the funds of the Federation as much as they can afford.

EAST LONDON FEDERATION OF THE SUFFRAGETTES.

24.6230694215 1915

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FAWCETT COLLECTION

# OUR FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

This First Annual Report of the a big procession and demonstra-East London Federation of the Suffragettes covers a period of two and ahalf years, for though the East London Federation of the Suffragettes became a distinct organisation on January 27th, 1914, its beginnings were in October, 1912.

During the summer of 1912, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst enlisted the help of Lady Sybil Smith, Mrs. Drummond, and a number of local organisations of the W.S.P.U., in organising a series of popular Votes for Women demonstrations on the western side of London. And after these it was agreed that the popular campaign must be carried into East London, not merely with the object of holding a series of fugitive demonstrations, but in order that a permanent Suffrage movement might be built up.

There were many reasons for this step :-- On the one hand, the women of East London suffer, perhaps more from evil social conditions than the people of any other part of the civilised world, and, therefore, these women, perhaps more than any others, most urgently need the Vote. On the other hand, the comparative nearness to the House of Commons of this vast industrial area makes it possible for the women who live there to bring the pressure of a popular protest to bear on Parliament in a more effective way than that which is possible to their fellows who live further afield.

At Miss Sylvia Pankhurst's appeal, Kensington, Chelsea and Padding-ton W.S.P.U.'s agreed to help in opening up the East London propaganda, and centres were at once started by them in Bethnal Green, Stepney, Limehouse and Poplar. The W.S.P.U. headquarters at Lincoln's Inn House rented a shop in Bow Road, and Miss Sylvia Pankhurst collected a workers left the East End, and all body of voluntary workers for that financial aid from the W.S.P.U. headdistrict. After six weeks' work quarters was finally withdrawn.

tion was held in Victoria Park, on November 10th, 1912. Immediately after the demonstration came the Bow and Bromley By-election, in which Mr. George Lansbury, the Labour Member of Parliament for the constituency, resigned his seat, in order to be free to fight on the Votes for Women issue. All the Suffrage societies helped in the by-election, but Mr. Lansbury was not returned. Soon after the By-election, and originally at Miss Sylvia Pankhurst's suggestion, preparations began to be made for the Working Women's Deputation to Mr. Lloyd George. Though volunteers for the Deputation were invited from all over the country, by far the largest number came from East London, and the various East London districts were the most systematically worked. The Speaker allowed a gathering of 50 of the women in the Grand Committee Room of Westminster Hall, but of the thousands who had volunteered for the Deputation, only twelve were finally chosen to go to Downing Street. These included : a Poplar laundress, a home-worker who made pinafores at sweated rates in Bow, a waste rubber worker from Poplar, and the wife of a

Green, for which she paid 5s. a week in rent. Mr. Lloyd George assured the Deputation that the Votes for Women Amendments to the Reform Bill would be carried, but the same night the Speaker announced that if this were done the whole Reform Bill would be out of order.

labourer earning 22s. a week, who had eight children and lived in a wretched two-roomed tenement in Bethnal

After the Working Women's Deputation was over, most of the West London

#### **Opening of Roman Road Shop.**

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Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was determined that the East End work must go on. A few pounds still remained in the Popular Campaign fund, and Lady Sybil Smith, who was treasurer, agreed that this should be devoted to East End work. It was therefore decided to take the risk of opening a permanent East End headquarters in Bow, and a shop and house at 321 Roman Road was taken at a rental of 14s.6d.aweek. It was the only shop to let in the road. The shop window was broken right across, and was only held together by putty. The landlord would not put in new glass, nor would he repair the many holes in the shop and passage flooring, because he thought we should only stay a short time. But all such things have since been done.

Plenty of friends at once rallied round us. Women who had joined the Union in the last few weeks came in and scrubbed the floors and cleaned the windows. Mrs. Wise, who kept the sweet shop next door, lent us a trestle table for a counter, and helped us to put up purple, white and green flags. Her little boy took down the shutters for us every morning, and put them up each night, and her little girls often came in to sweep. A week after the shop was opened, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst and Miss Emerson were arrested. They went to prison on Friday night, February 14th, 1913, and their fines were paid on Saturday at noon. They had been hunger-striking, and as soon as they had broken their fast they went back to Bow. They found Mrs. Lake scrubbing the table, and as many other members as the shop would hold talking about the situation, and wondering how they were getting on.

#### **First East London** Imprisonments.

On the following Monday, February 17th, a meeting was held at the Obelisk, and after it was over, Mrs. Watkins, Mrs. Moor, Miss Annie Lansbury, and MissSylvia Pankhurst, broke an undertaker's window, Mr. Will Lansbury broke a window in the Bromley Public Hall, and Miss Emerson broke a Liberal Club window. They were all six arrested, and sent to prison without the option of a fine.

That was the beginning of Militancy in East London. Miss Emerson, Mrs. Watkins and Miss Sylvia Pankhurst decided to do the hunger-strike, and hoped that they would soon be out to work again. But though Mrs. Watkins was released after ten days, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst and Miss Emerson were forcibly fed for upwards of five weeks.

Meanwhile, a tremendous flame of enthusiasm had burst forth in the East End. Great meetings were held, and during these imprisonments long processions marched eight times the six miles to the gates of Holloway to cheer the prisoners.

Early in April the anti-Suffragist Government entered on a strenuous campaign of Suffragette persecution.

Mrs. Pankhurst, Annie Kenney and others were sentenced for conspiracy. A musty old Statute of Edward III, which was directed by that Monarch and his Government against "pillers and robbers from beyond the seas," was raked up, and under it Mr. George Lansbury and others were summonsed for their Suffrage speeches. Attempts were made to prohibit the publication of the newspaper, The Suffragette, and militant Suffrage meetings were prohibited in Hyde Park.

The police kept the Suffragette platforms out of the Park, but they could not prevent the women speak-Nevertheless, anti-Suffragist ing. hooligans and police together might have given the speakers a bad time, but for the help of the East London dockers, who fought to protect the women Sunday after Sunday.

On Sunday, May 25th, 1913, was held "Women's May Day" in East London. The Members in Bow, Bromley, Poplar, and neighbouring districts had prepared for it for many weeks past, and had made hundreds of almond branches, which were carried in a great procession with purple, white and green flags, and caps of Liberty, from the East India Dock Gates, by winding ways, to Victoria Park. A vast crowd of people-then

said to be the biggest ever seen in East London-assembled in the Hyde Park of East London to hear the speakers from 20 platforms.

#### Formation of the Federation.

A few days later the organisation, which was then called the East London Federation of the W.S.P.U., was formally set up, to unite for greater strength the local Unions that had been formed in Bow, Bromley, Poplar, Limehouse and Hackney. Canning Town has since been added to the number. It was decided that the Federation Councilshould consist of the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Financial and Hon. Meetings Secretaries, the District Secretaries and Organisers, and two elected representatives of the Members in each district.

#### **Our First Trafalgar Square** Meeting.

On Sunday, June 29th, 1913, the East London Federation organised a big procession to Trafalgar Square, in which Suffrage Societies, Trades' Unions and Labour Organisations joined. There was an immense crowd in the Square. But of what use was one more big meeting where so many had been held? The "Cat and Mouse" Act had just been passed, and under it Mrs. Pankhurst and a number of other hunger-strikers were being ruthlessly dragged back and back to prison. Their lives were at stake. Emily Wilding Davison, impressed by their peril, had given her own life to make the nation think. On June 4th, she had flung herself into the midst of the Derby racehorses, and had been killed. In face of such happenings what was the use of talking? The need was for an emphatic public protest. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst asked the people to go and hoot the Cabinet Ministers, and, if they were able, to do more than hoot-to imprison the Cabinet Ministers in their official residences, as they had imprisoned more than 2,000 women Suffragists, until the Ministers would agree to give women the Vote.

She had hardly finished speaking when the people were streaming off

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down Whitehall, and soon they were hooting and shouting "Votes for Women" outside Mr. Asquith's house. Police reinforcements were immediately hurried across from Scotland Yard to force the people away, and a sharp struggle took place, in which five men were arrested.

The following Thursday, July 3rd, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, too, was summonsed under the antique Statute of Edward III to appear at Bow Street, on July 5th. She did not consider it her duty to obey, and instead she went away for the week-end, and then made her way to the Bromley Public Hallin Bow Road, where she had promised to speak. After the meeting the people rallied unanimously, and fought to protect her from the detectives, who had come with a warrant for her arrest. Eventually she was taken prisoner with five others, one of whom was Miss Mary Richardson.

After remaining the night at Bow Street, she was sentenced next morning to three months' imprisonment, because she would not promise not to make militant speeches. On reaching prison she started the hunger and thirst strike.

East London was in a state of great excitement, and the members decided that Miss Sylvia Pankhurst ought to go down and stay there, in order that they might all help to protect her from re-arrest. Mrs. Payne and her husband, both of whom were shoe-makers living at 28 Ford Road, Bow, asked her to stay with them as their guest, and she went straight there on her release the following Sunday. Splendid meetings were held during her week's license at Bromley Public Hall and Poplar Town Hall. On the Monday after the license expired she got to the Bromley Public Hall Meeting in disguise, and so splendidly did the good people fight with her to forward Votes for Women, and to smash the "Cat and Mouse" Act, that detectives and policemen were held at bay, and she was rushed away into safety by the crowd. This was the first time that the police met

#### The "Cat and Mouse" Act Applied in East London.

with organised resistance when at- public meeting, and especially against

#### Second Trafalgar Square Meeting.

On Sunday, July 27th, the East London Federation organised another great March to Trafalgar Square. The Square was densely packed with people. In spite of a veritable host of policemen and detectives, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was able to get there in disguise, and just at the moment when the principal superintendent of police was asking if she had arrived, and his lieutenants were replying in the negative, she was taking a seat at the back of one of Landseer's lions. When she came, undisguised, from majority of those present went with a sheltering group of friends, the people with cheers eagerly agreed to go to Downing Street to carry our Women's Declaration of Independence (a big petition for the Vote, which had been largely signed in East London) to the Prime Minister's official residence.

It was said that no meeting so large had been held there since the eighties. At the top of Whitehall, policemen on horseback met us. We rushed between them and pressed on, but after a struggle Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was dragged off to Holloway by detectives, the crowd was beaten back, and 27 people, including Mrs. Pascoe, Miss Billing, and Mrs. Ward Brown were doing a tremendous amount of good arrested.

Next day Mr. Lansbury's appeal against the sentence imposed upon him under the Act of Edward III was decided against him. He was taken to Pentonville on Wednesday, July 30th, but on adopting the hunger-strike he was released on a "Cat and Mouse" license the next Saturday, but was never re-arrested.

#### Third Trafalgar Square Meeting.

On August 10th, the Free Speech Defence Committee, a composite body on which sat many Radical and Labour Members of Parliament and Labour leaders, announced a demonstration in Trafalgar Suare to protest against the Government's many attempts to

tempting to arrest a Suffragist prisoner. the prosecution of speakers under the Act of Edward III. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was asked to speak (with Mr. Lansbury and Mr. Scurr, and Mrs. Cohen who had also been summonsed under the Act, though never sent to prison) on condition that she would pledge herself not to lead the crowd to Downing Street. She replied that she could not agree to this condition, and issued a leaflet "To Lovers of Freedom," saying that after the Free Speech people had done their talking, she would be present in the Square to go with those who cared to come to the Prime Minister's official residence. This she did, and the vast her as far as they could go. When they were beaten back by the mounted police, 18 people, most of whom were East London men, besides Miss Sylvia Pankhurst and Miss Mary Paterson, were arrested, and the windows of a motor 'bus were broken. Some of the people had armed themselves with sticks and weapons made of knotted rope, which in East London are called "Saturday nights." These were produced in court.

These demonstrations of militant popular support were a fine answer to those who were saying that public opinion was against the women in their fight for liberty. Moreover, they were all over the country, for, following the cue of East London, working people from Lands End to John o' Groats were beginning, more than they had ever done before, to feel that Votes for Women was their question.

#### Police Raid Bow Baths.

On August 10th, Parliament was prorogued, and during the holiday season steady propaganda work was carried on. On October 13th, a big meeting was held in Bow Baths.

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst got there in disguise. The people held the front door against the police and detectives, but she had not been speaking ten minutes when policemen sprang on to the platform from behind the curtains, with truncheons suppress the rights of free speech and drawn. The people shouted "Jump,

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Sylvia, jump!" She jumped, as they told her, from the platform into the audience, and turned, for the moment half dazed with the shock, to see policemen with truncheons and detectives with loaded sticks smashing the chairs and striking the people, who were crowded on the platform. Mrs. Mary Leigh was knocked insensible, Mrs. Ives was held up by the collar and struck with a truncheon, so that her arm was broken. Miss Forbes Robertson, sister of the great actor, also had her arm broken, and many unknown men and women were seriously hurt. The people in the gallery retaliated by throwing chairs down on to the police. People in the audience then stole up behind Miss Pankhurst, put somebody's hat and coat on her, and led her out that she might speak in Poplar Town Hall next night.

As Miss Emerson was leaving the hall a detective, who was annoyed because the people called "Puss! Puss !" to him, struck her on the side of the head with a lead-weighted instrument. Mr. Mansell-Moullin, the noted surgeon, stated, on examining her, that Miss Emerson's skull was fractured, and that if the blow had been struck an eighth of an inch further back she would certainly have been killed.

Next night Miss Pankhurst was recognized by the detectives, who crowded the steps of the Poplar Town Hall, and a couple of hundred police-men had closed round Miss Pankhurst before the people could get to her. Mr. and Mrs. McKay who rushed towards her were arrested.

Miss Pankhurst was released after nine days. Though obliged to be carried to speak at Bow Baths and Poplar Town Hall on a stretcher during her week's licence, she was up and doing at the end of the week. A few days after the expiration of her licence she spoke at the Royal Albert Hall and the Hackney Baths, and was so well protected by the people that she was able to get away in safety.

#### Police Raid in Roman Road.

On November 5th, 1913, another meeting was held in Bow Baths.

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Miss Pankhurston her way there called at Mr. Lansbury's house in St. Stephen's Road. The house was immediately surrounded by detectives and policemen, and there seemed no possibility of escape. But the people of Bow, on hearing of the trouble, came flocking out of the Baths where they had assembled. In the confusion that ensued the detectives dragged Miss Daisy Lansbury off in a taxi, and Miss Pankhurst went free.

When the police authorities realized their mistake, and learnt that Miss Pankhurst was actually speaking in the Baths, they sent hundreds of men to take her, but though they scrutinised the people as they came from the hall, and most brutally ill-used them in the Roman Road outside, she escaped. Miss Emerson was again struck on the head, this time by a uniformed constable, and fell to the ground unconscious. Many other people were badly hurt. The people replied with spirit. Two mounted policemen were unhorsed, and many others were disabled.

Twice shortly afterwards Miss Pankhurst spoke in Canning Town Public Hall, and each time went free, the police, though present in large numbers to take her, preferring not to attack. One Sunday afternoon she spoke in Bow Palace, and marched openly with the people to Ford Road. When she spoke from the window afterwards a veritable forest of sticks was waved by the crowd. The police had evidently guessed that we were armed, and so treated us with respect. The same thing happened at Canning Town. It was not until her eighth Meeting, at Shoreditch Town Hall, a district in which the East London Federation had never before held a meeting, that Miss Pankhurst was taken. Five other persons were arrested.

As a result of the police raid on Bow Baths on October 13th, and the police treatment of the people on Nov. 5th, the Poplar Borough Council unjustly refused to let for Suffragette meetings Bow Baths, the Bromley Public Hall, and the Poplar Town Hall-the only large public halls in the Poplar Borough.

# Police Raid in Tomlin's Grove.

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Whilst Miss Pankhurst was in prison, after her arrest at Shoreditch, a Meeting of Protest against the refusal of the public halls to the Suffragettes was held in Bow Palace, on Sunday afternoon, December 14th. After the meeting it was arranged to go in procession around the district, and to hoot outside the houses of hostile Borough Councillors. A strong force of police both on horse and foot assaulted the people in Tomlin's Grove. Many people were seriously hurt by the policemen, including the big drummer and a number of passers by. The police even snatched the bandsmen's instruments away and threw them over the garden walls. Nine people were arrested.

Mr. Atkinson, a labourer, was disgracefully knocked about and then arrested. In the police station several witnesses asserted that Inspector Potter deliberately struck Mr. Atkinson in the face and gave him a black eye. Mr. Atkinson afterwards brought an action for assault. The magistrate committed Potter for trial, but at the Assizes he was whitewashed.

In the Christmas holidays a Suffrage school was held by the Federation at which lectures on technical subjects bearing upon the women's movement were given by Dr. Flora Murray, Dr. Jessie Murray, Mr. Nevinson, Mr. Joseph Clayton, Miss Bonwick and others. Immediately atterwards, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was waylaid by detectives in the street at night, and forcibly dragged off to Holloway in a laundry cart.

In the meantime Lady Sybil Smith, our first Treasurer, had been obliged to resign at the end of December, on account of home ties, and Mrs. D. A. Thomas had kindly undertaken to hold this post temporarily. In April she was succeeded by the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield, who held the post of Hon. Treasurer till family matters changed her plans in February, 1915, when she was succeeded by Dr. Barbara Tchavkovsky.

Miss Dalglish had resigned her post of Hon. Financial Secretary in November, 1913, when Miss Norah

Smyth, our present Hon. Financial Secretary, took up the work, which has grown more and more arduous. All the detailed financial work of the organisation, besides countless other matters, are committed to her care.

#### Formation of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes.

At the close of 1913, it was wished by the W.S.P.U. leaders that the East London Federation should become a separate society in name, as already it was in regard to its finances, its practical organisation and actions.

On January 27th, 1914, at a meeting of the East London Federation Committee, held at 28, Ford Road, Bow, this was agreed to, and it was decided that the name of our organisation should now be "The East London Federation of the Suffragettes." Also that the colours instead of being the purple, white and green of the W.S.P.U., should be purple, white, green and red.

The change did not denote any alteration in either policy or principles. Since it has taken place we have found that it has worked entirely in the direction of greater and more speedy development.

#### Poplar By-election.

Immediately after the change came the Poplar By-election. On the eve of the contest Miss Pankhurst went secretly to our Committee Rooms and lived there during the campaign. Each afternoon we held two crowded women's meetings, having to turn the audience out at half time to make room for more women to come in. We also spoke to enthusiastic gatherings from the window every night. On the eve of the poll the Federation organised a procession in which a number of other Suffrage societies took part.

Miss Pankhurst marched in the procession, and spoke afterwards to a vast Open-Air Meeting at the Dock gates. It was evident that most of the people there were prepared to act the part of bodyguard if necessary. There were many detectives watching by the road, but no more than half a dozen constables were to be seen. It had been widely advertised that Miss Pankhurst was to be there.

her? Why did not the detectives and policemen come cutting their way through the people with loaded sticks and truncheons as they had done so often before and since? Undoubtedly because it was the eve of the polla proof of the headway suffragettes had made with the electorate. The detectives themselves told Miss Pankhurst, when arresting her on a subsequent occasion, that that night in Poplar we were surrounded by too many friends and the spirit of the crowd was too militant for any such attempt to be made. On February 27th, Miss Smyth was arrested in Ford Road for drilling the People's \* Army.

#### Fourth Trafalgar Square Meeting

On March 8th was held another procession from East London and a Demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Miss Pankhurst was arrested just as she was about to join the procession in the Strand before getting to the meeting, and as a protest, a rush was made towards Downing Street, in which five men and five women, including Miss Mary Phillips, Miss Bennett, Miss Mackay and Miss Gliksten, werearrested. On March 9th, a further protest was made by East London Suffragists, by the smashing of win-dows in Mr. McKenna's house, the Colonial Office and the Home Office. Ink was also splashed about.

#### First Publication of the "Woman's Dreadnought."

But a more important event on March 8th than the Trafalgar Square meeting was the issuing of the East London Federation's newspaper, the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT, the only 1/2d. weekly Suffrage newspaper in the world. An advance number of this paper was first published at id., on March 8th, for the Trafalgar Square meeting, and the first regular weekly 1/2 d. number came out on March 21st.

The WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT is the only Suffrage paper in the country

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which makes a distinct appeal to working people. It deals with the franchise question from the working woman's point of view, and reports Why was no attempt made to arrest the activities of women in the labour world. Many of its contributors are working women, who write of their personal experiences of wages, housing, Poor Law, and so on. Experts on social questions. Such well known Suffragists as Mrs. Mansell-Moullin, Mr. Mansell-Moullin, Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett. Mr. George Lansbury, Mrs. Scurr, Dr. Tchaykovsky, Mrs. Mary Leigh, Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, Mr. Nevinson, Miss Theodora Bonwick, Mr. Laurence Housman, Mr. Joseph Clayton, and Suffragist leaders from other countries, are also contributors to its columns. The DREADNOUGHT at once proved

itself to be an invaluable help to the local work of the Federation, and a demand for it is springing up more and more amongst working women and men all over the country. Its circulation has steadily increased.

The circulation would be much larger if the Federation could afford to pay for the display of posters and for other forms of advertisement, but so far this has been impossible owing to the lack of funds. Some newsagents have kindly displayed posters gratuitously, but it is customary for book-stalls and railway stations to charge 20s. to 30s. a year for each poster.

Perhaps the most impressive demon-

stration yet held by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes was that on Sunday, March 22nd, when the appropriate occasion of "Mothering Sunday" was chosen to organise a procession from Bow to Westminster Abbey, to pray for the granting of Votes for Women. Miss Pankhurst had been released from Holloway, on hunger and thirst strike, exactly a week before, and so was still too weak to walk in the procession. A wheeled spinal carriage was therefore provided, in order that she might go with the people. Her "Cat and Mouse" license had expired the day before, and our friends were so much afraid lest the

#### March to Westminster Abbey.



ON THE WAY TO THE ABBEY, Mothering Sunday, March 22nd, 1914.



THE CHAINED GUARD, May 23rd, 1914.

police should come to re-arrest her, that they crowded round the little carriage until the wheels were buckled. Six men in the crowd at once lifted it shoulder high, and relays of volunteers were forthcoming to carry her to Westminster. An immense procession marched to the Abbey, being joined by recruits all the way. We were refused admission to the Abbey, which was alleged to be already full, but the service conducted for us outside by Rev. C. A. Wills was more impressive than that held within.

A fortnight later, on April 5th, another great meeting was held in Victoria Park, to which the people marched in procession from Canning Town via Poplar. As Miss Sylvia Pankhurst had made but poor progress in recovering from the hunger strike, the people again carried her to the Park, and no arrest was made.

#### May 1st.

On May 1st, when all the Trade Unions of the country were celebrating the Festival of Labour, the East London Federation of the Suffragettes had its own platform in Hyde Park, and the crowd that assembled to hear the East London working women was bigger than that at any other platform.

#### Arrest on Woman's May Day.

On May 24th, the Federation held its second Women's May Day in Victoria Park Twenty men and women formed a chained guard for Miss Pankhurst. They wore belts round their waists and were chained together in a square—Miss Pankhurst being in the centre.

As the chained guard reached the Park Gates, the front half of the procession having passed through, the gates were shut and the mounted police closed round the chained guard. After a struggle, the police and detectives, who had edged up dressed as costers, at last succeeded in dragging the chained guard inside the boating enclosure, where they smashed the padlocks with their truncheons and made the desired arrest.

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Meanwhile, vigorous fighting was taking place outside, and the Park railings were broken down by the people who were determined to enter. Unfortunately, several people received very rough treatment.

#### Propaganda Work.

The continuous propaganda work of the East London Federation, both when it was still a branch of the W.S.P.U., and since, has included regular weekly open-air meetings at dozens of pitches in Bow, Bromley, Poplar, Limehouse, Stepney, Canning Town, Hackney, and other districts, so that the whole area has become thoroughly imbued with the Suffragist ideal. Each of the E.L.F.S. branches also holds one or more regular indoor meetings in the afternoons and evenings at its own headquarters, and since the formation of the Federation, rarely a week has passed without a big public meeting in one of the largest halls in East London.

Miss Amy Hicks, M.A., was our very able and tireless Hon. Meetings Secretary until August, 1915.

#### **Opening of the Women's Hall.**

Meanwhile, on May 4th, 1914, another big new move was made in the opening of the Women's Hall, 400 Old Ford Road, the new premises including: a house, to which Mr. and Mrs. Payne moved with us; a large hall, holding about 350 people; and a smaller hall, holding about 50 or 60. The Women's Hall at once became the centre of many activities. Sunday meetings, at which many of the best speakers in the movement may be heard, have been held here ever since, the speeches being preceded by music, at first kindly arranged by Miss Gliksten, and afterwards by Miss Murray Clark, and the Hall is in constant use for member's meetings, at homes, and social gatherings. A Junior Suffragette's Club for girls between 14 and 18 was formed, and still meets on Wednesday evenings. A Christmas Savings' Club was also formed by the Bow, Hackney and Canning Town branches of the Federation. Stalls on Friday nights and Saturdays for

selling the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT and other literature were started and are still held regularly in Bow and Poplar, and have proved an excellent means of advertisement.

#### **Deputation to Prime Minister.**

The biggest and most successful effort the East London Federation had yet made took place in June, 1914.

When Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was released from her eighth hunger and thirst strike under the "Cat and Mouse" Act, on May 30th, it was decided to organise a popular depu-tation from East London to the Prime Minister, to demand Votes for ceeded far when the police, who Women.

ings were arranged in Bow, in Limehouse, and in Canning Town, at which carried and took her back to Holloway. the members of the deputation were elected, and the actual terms of the demand to be made were put to the vote. Three alternatives were put to the audiences :---

(I) To demand simply Votes for Women, leaving it to the Government to draft the actual Bill embodying this reform, and reserving to ourselves the right to criticise its terms.

(2) To demand Votes for Women on the terms at present exercised by men, with a promise that women are to have an equal share in the Adult Suffrage Reform Bill, which the Government say they intend to introduce.

(3) To demand a Vote for every woman over 21 years of age.

At each meeting the audience decided almost unanimously to demand that the Vote should be granted to every woman over 21 years of age.

As soon as Miss Pankhurst had been released from prison she wrote to Mr. Asquith calling upon him to receive the deputation. He refused. We had fixed the deputation for June 10th, and on June 8th, Miss Pankhurst again wrote urging him to change his mind, and re-stating, as she had announced from the first, that should the deputation be refused, and she snatched away from the people and dragged back to Holloway, she should the Stranger's entrance.

continue her hunger and thirst strike, both in prison and when released, on the steps of the Strangers Entrance to the House of Commons, until either the deputation were received or she should die. Mr. Asquith promptly refused to receive the deputation.

On the evening of June 10th, a vast crowd assembled outside 400 Old Ford Road to march to the House of Commons, and a second procession assembled at the East India Dock Gates, Poplar, it being announced that the processions should converge at Gardiner's corner.

The Bow procession had not pro-Vomen. Three crowded public Rally Meet-were present in large numbers snatched away the stretcher on which Miss Pankhurst was being

The processionists marched to within a mile of the House, then broke their ranks, and in order to keep within regulations, proceeded individually to the door. All were at first refused admittance, but eventually Mr. Lansbury induced Sir William Byles to take nine women and three men into the Lobby. This deputation interviewed Mr. Illingworth, the Chief Liberal Whip, who promised to take a letter to Mr. Asquith.

From this time onward the E.L.F.S. members, and many men and women friends, lobbied constantly during the hours that the House was sitting, and also picketted the gates of Holloway both day and night. They were also vigorous and constant in poster parading, and DREADNOUGHT selling. On Thursday, June 18th, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was released from Holloway and taken by a wardress to 400 Old Ford Road. Miss Smythand other pickets followed in a motor car in which Miss Pankhurst was then driven to the House of Commons. The police who were massed in strong force at the door, announced that the Speaker had ordered them to prevent Miss Pankhurst from entering. After waiting some time, whilst Mr. Keir Hardie tried to induce the Speaker to alter his decision, Miss Pankhurst was helped from the car and lay down on the steps of the small door beside

The police ordered her to go, and an inspector was just in the act of stooping to drag her up, when Mr. Lansbury rushed up in the nick of time with a promise from the Prime Minister to receive the deputation on

Saturday, June 20th, two days later. The deputation consisted of Mrs. Scurr and Mrs. Bird of Poplar, Mrs. Payne, Mis. Hughes and Mrs. Ford of Bow, and Mrs. Parsons of Canning Town. As had been arranged, the deputation demanded an immediate measure to give a vote to every woman over 21 years of age. They also demanded the unconditional release of Miss Pankhurst and Mrs. Walker, who, on June 16th had been sentenced to a month's imprisonment under the Act of Edward III for a speech delivered at Limehouse Town Hall on June 3rd. A verbatim report of the speeches of the deputation appeared in the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT No. 15, dated June 27th. Very full reports also appeared in the entire Press of the country, and the editorial comments were very much more cordial than any that had hitherto appeared in regard to the Suffrage question.

#### The Prime Minister's Reply.

Asquith said :-

"I think I am right in saying that the substance of the case you have presented to me to-day comes to this : serve her full sentence, but Miss that the economic conditions under Sylvia Pankhurst was not re-arrested, which women labour in a community like, for instance, the East End of London, are such that, either in the way of legislation, or perhaps in the way of administration, we cannot get substantial and intelligent reform, unless women themselves have a voice in choosing representatives for Parliament. . . . You have each of you given me illustrations drawn from your own experience, or from the experience of your leaders, to show that that is not a mere rhetorical statement, but does correspond to the actual facts of East End life.

"As I say I am not going to argue, because I will take all these things into careful consideration.

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He added :--

"If the change has to come, we must face it boldly and make it thoroughgoing and democratic.

The Prime Minister concluded by promising again "most careful and mature consideration."

Mr. Asquith's reply was hailed by the Press as a great advance on his previous statements. The Manchester Guardian declared it to be "a most happy augury." The New Statesman said: "A distinct step forward." The Nation: "A new chapter of hope in the history of this question. . . . Nothing less than the powerful opposition of the Prime Minister could have delayed it during the last three years. . . . The tone of Mr. Asquith's answer to the East End deputation makes for the hope that his attitude in future will be less unqualified." The Labour Leader : "No expression was given to the determined opposition with which he once met Women's Suffrage arguments, and beneath his words there seemed to be a recognition that the enfranchisement of women cannot long be delayed." The Christian Commonwealth : "We heartily welcome the unmistakable softening of Mr. Asquith's attitude." In replying to the deputation, Mr. Though we have written to him many times for it, Mr. Asquith has

never given the result of his promised "mature consideration." Mrs. Walker was left in prison to though out of her three months' sentence 20 days still remained to serve. She was never formally notified that she would not be re-arrested.

On June 28th, the E.L.F.S. joined the Forward Cymric Suffrage Union and the United Suffragists in another Trafalgar Square Demonstration.

#### **Overseas Visitors.**

On July 9th, the New Woman Suffrage Society for the British Dominions Overseas held their first Conference, and on July 10th the E.L.F.S. arranged an East London tour for the overseas visitors. On July 10th the visitors were entertained at the Women's Hall, Bow.

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OUR POPLAR RESTAURANT, 20 RAILWAY STREET.



IN THE NORMAN ROAD NURSERY.

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On July 12th, a procession marched from Bow to Canning Town Public Hall, where a great meeting was held, at which many of the overseas visitors were present.

After this it seemed that holidays and steady propaganda work should be continued through the summer with a view to more effective militant action when Parliament met for the autumn session. The "No Rent" strike for the vote was the big achievement, towards which it seemed advisable to work.

#### The Declaration of War.

But our plans were overturned by the declaration of War on August 4th. As soon as that happened the E.L.F.S. Committee was called together, and it was decided that the Federation must take an actively vigilant part in striving to protect the women during the International crisis in which it was certain that they must suffer terribly in any event.

#### Food and Rent.

The food question engaged our immediate attention, for prices at once rose enormously, and even at the enhanced prices, many poor housewives were unable to buy because of the panic buying by richer people.

The E.L.F.S. at once demanded that the Government should control the supply of food, and that the Moratorium should be extended to cover rent.

The question of immediately proclaiming the "No Rent" strike, in order to secure this and to win votes for women, was considered by a general meeting, but it was decided that the time was inopportune, as in the meantime prices had been reduced considerably and it had been demonstrated that there was no immediate danger of a shortage of food. The Emergency Courts Acts, which afforded some protection against eviction had, also been passed.

As it was held, however, that complete Government control of the food supply was still necessary, a deputation from the Federation waited upon the President of the Board of Trade representative men and women. The

The Federation also demanded that Military and Naval Pensions and separation allowances shall be paid as a right, not as a charity, at the rate of £1 a week for an adult, and 5s. a week for each child. The Federation has also emphatically protested against the police supervision of soldiers' wives and mothers. More Deputations. To put forward these views, deputations from the E.L.F.S. waited upon the War Office and the Committee for London. A petition to the Queen,

calling for the minimum wage of 5d. an hour, or  $f_1$  a week, above referred to, was drafted on behalt of the E.L.F.S., and signed by a number of

on September 2nd, and demanded that:

During the War the food supply shall be controlled by the Government in the interests of all the people, and that work-ing women shall be placed on all Com-mittees for fixing food prices.

The deputation supplied Mr. Runciman with a number of family budgets, showing great hardships still being suffered by poor women, to whom it is barely possible to make ends meet at the best of times.

#### Public Work for the Unemployed.

As soon as War broke out the E L.F.S. also demanded that working men and women thrown out of employment by the War should be provided with work at Trade Union rates by the Government, pointing out that agriculture and horticulture, food preserving, cattle rearing, and dairy-ing, were all rendered doubly important because of the War, and that for the preservation of the coming generation, improvements in housing and sanitation were urgently overdue.

The Federation also demanded that women should be paid a minimum wage of not less than 5d. an hour, or  $f_{1}$  a week, on all work subsidised by public funds, or when employed by Government contractors.

#### **Military and Naval Pensions and** Separation allowances.

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#### A STREET IN BOW.

tion, but instead we were received by Miss Mary MacArthur, the Secretary of the National Committee for Women's Employment, which administers the Queen's Work for Women Fund.

To press forward these various objects and of course to reiterate the demand for the enfranchisement of women, several large deputations from joined with the United Suffragists. Our

Queen was asked to receive a deputa- the E.L.F.S. waited upon Members of Parliament at the House of Commons, and meetings were held at the East India Dock Gates, Canning Town Public Hall, Limehouse Town Hall, Devonshire Hall Hackney, and The Pavilion, Brighton, and we have had two meetings in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, at one of which we

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regular indoor and outdoor meetings have been continued and extended.

#### Coping with East London Distress.

As soon as War was declared, the E.L.F.S., found itself a centre to which numbers of women in distress through the War were constantly coming for advice and practical help. It was intensely gratifying to realize that so many women felt that the Suffragettes were their friends.

A Distress Bureau was at once opened at the Women's Hall, Bow, where all applicants were registered on cards similar to those used in connection with the Prince of Wales's Fund. Soldiers' and sailors' wives and mothers were, and are, advised in regard to obtaining pensions and separation allowances; the local Soldiers' and Sailors' Association, Army Paymasters and the War Office are communicated with, the Feder-ation acting as a Trade Union or as a family solicitor might have done, on their behalf. Similar help and advice was, and is, given to persons thrown out of work through the War, or suffering in any way because of it. Many chronic Poor Law cases also came at once for help, and for these the Federation then endeavoured to secure increased allowances, in view of the enhanced cost of living due to the War. Our representatives have several times been to Court to plead with Magistrates to refuse to allow evictions under the Emergency Courts Act, and we have been successful in obtaining the release from prison of a soldier's father who had been committed for inability to pay a fine incurred through poverty.

The Federation, though hitherto unable to induce the Government to make a definite rule that women shall not be employed for less than 5d. an hour when engaged in Army contracts, has secured the raising of wages in a number of cases, notably that of Kent's, Army brushmakers, whose rates of pay were raised from 1s. 1d. and 1s. 2d. to 1s. 7d. a dozen brushes.

#### **Extensions in Bromley, Poplar** and Canning Town.

The distress work started in Bow was almost immediately carried into

Poplar and Bromley. At first it was done at the old offices at 319 East India Dock Road, and Crowder Hall, Bow Road, but on September 28th the Poplar Women's Hall was opened at 20 Railway Street, and on September 26th the Crowder Hall work was removed to 53 St. Leonard Street, Bromley. Distress work was begun later in Canning Town, and the centre which was opened at Butcher's Road on October 27th, and was transferred to 55 Fife Road in February, is as yet of much smaller scope.

Within a week of the War we started in Bow a daily free distribution of milk to the babies of necessitous mothers. This work extended so rapidly that in the Bow centre milk was soon being supplied daily to upwards of 200 cases, and the number in Poplar was almost as large. Milk depots were also opened simultaneously with the distress bureaux at Bromley and Canning Town. We soon realized the advisability of combining the milk distribution with regular weekly baby weighing, regular visits to the doctor, who attends weekly at the centres, and regular home visitation by a qualified nurse. As rapidly as possible these features have been added, together with the provision of maternity outfits, Glaxo, Virol, eggs, barley and other things ordered by our doctors. The progress made by the mothers and babies under our care has been most marked and many lives have been saved.

To provide milk only for the nursing and expectant mothers and the babies, whilst the entire family was in need of food, was well enough in its way, but exceedingly incomplete. The mothers, moreover, could not live on milk alone. We therefore determined to open "cost-price" restaurants at which two-course meals might be bought at 1d. for children and 2d. for adults, and free meals, especially in the case of nursing and expectant mothers, might be given where necessary. This has been done in Bow,

#### **Mothers' and Babies'** Centres.

#### **Restaurants.**

Poplar and Bromley. The Bow restaurant was started on August 31st.

#### Work for the Unemployed.

The best solution for distress arising th ough unemployment is, of course, the provision of properly paid work, and though this is a costly enterprise, the E.L.F.S. has been able to do something also in this direction. In the DREADNOUGHT dated August 15th, we were able to announce that we had already opened an employment bureau and were ourselves employing a limited number of women at a wage of 5d an making dolls, toys and garments. Boots and shoes are made for the Federation under Mr. Payne, at 400 Old Ford Road.

Our manufactures will be put on a co-operative basis as soon as they are able to cover the cost of production and pay a fair wage for labour. Until that time we must subsidise them and hope for generous subscriptions from our friends to enable us to do so adequately.

## Our Nursery.

We have opened a day nursery at 45 Norman Road, Bow, in connection



THE DOLL ROOM OF THE FACTORY.

hour. This work has steadily increased and the E.L.F.S. now employs, quite apart from the political organisers and secretaries, 59 regular indoor workers on relief work of one kind or another, all but five of whom are on full time, and also a varying number of outworkers. None of the adult workers receive less than 5d. an hour or  $\pounds_1$  a week, some get more.

#### **Our Factory.**

We have opened a factory at 45 Stephen's Road, Bow. The Mother's Norman Road, Bow, where we are Arms, which was at one time a public-

with our factory, where women may leave their children at a cost of 3d. a day, including food. There are at present a dozen children in the nursery, and we are daily obliged to turn applicants away for lack of room, as subscriptions do not yet warrant an extension of our premises.

an extension of our premises. [Since the above paragraph was adopted by the Conference, "The Mothers' Arms" has been opened at the corner of Old Ford Road and St. Stephen's Road, Bow. The Mother's Arms, which was at one time a publichouse, called the Gunmakers' Arms, provides a home for our Bow Mother and Baby Clinic and free milk depot, and also a fine large day nursery. Doctors Johnson and Thackrah now attend our babies, and a large number of other friends have come forward to help in various ways since January.]

We have been able to arrange country holidays for a number of mothers and children.

The E.L.F.S. is specially indebted for help in its relief work to Mrs. Payne, Miss Mackay and Miss Edith Jones for work at the Distress Bureau and Maternity centre in Bow; Miss Hicks for similar work in Poplar; to Mrs. McCheyne and Mrs. Mantle in Bromley; and to Mrs. Parsons at Canning Town; and to Miss Joachim, who started the em-ployment bureau. Also to doctors Simpson and Royle, and to our devoted nurses. We also have to thank very cordially Mrs. Richmond and Miss Morgan Brown for starting the work of the Bow and Poplar Restaurants, and for providing private work for a number of women; also the other kind helpers who have given their services in the restaurants, and Lady Sybil Smith, who so ably organised the nursery and has been untiring in serving there herself, and in finding others who have given valuable help. Also Miss Burman, who stepped into the breach when Lady Sybil Smith's health made it impossible for her to attend continuously. We must also thank Miss Stuart who has conducted the regular sales of our toys at 400 Old Ford Road, and has taught some of our workers most dainty sewing, and the many friends who have arranged sales elsewhere. There are many others to whom the Federation has reason to be grateful, both for personal service and for subscriptions, including Mrs. Sadd-Brown and Miss Gliksten, who have helped us to raise money, and Mrs. Lancaster, who provided us with show cases for our toys.

#### **Children's Parties.**

The E.L.F.S. organised three large Children's Christmas Parties in Bow Baths, Poplar Town Hall and Canning Town Public Hall. Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett kindly gave us two Christmas trees, and Miss Murray Clark organised the entertainments.

#### Clothing.

We have been enabled by the kindness of many friends to hold regular sales of clothing, at very low prices, at each of our centres, and also to give numbers of garments away.

## Prince of Wales's Fund, Poplar.

Whilst developing our own schemes of relief, which would have been but

#### ANNUAL REPORT.

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temporary had the National arrangements been adequate, the E.L.F.S. felt it necessary to claim representation on the local Mayor's Committees. We wrote offering our services in the Boroughs of Poplar, Hackney, Stepney and West Ham. In Poplar Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was placed on the Mayor's Committee to represent the E.L.F.S., and Miss Smyth, Mrs. Cheyne and Mrs. Winter obtained seats on the local Mayor's Committees. Mrs. Parsons was a visitor for the West Ham Distress Committee. As the E.L.F.S. representative on the Poplar Mayor's Committee, Miss Pankhurst has to report that the administration of the Prince of Wales's Fund in the Borough is unsatisfactory in the extreme. The delays in granting relief have been wholly unwariantable, and the Mayor, ignoring the decisions of the main committee, has relieved on a grossly inadequate scale. The Cabinet Committee has arbitrarily ordered the reduction of the relief for the Borough, and the Mayor, again ignoring his Committee, has complied.

In this connection the E.L.F.S. organised a deputation to the Cabinet Committee which was received by Mr. Herbert Samuel and Mr. John Burns. By this means the reduction of relief was partially checked. Exposures in the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT have also served to this end, but further vigilance is most necessary, and a meeting to discuss this question is being held by the E.L.F.S. in Bow Baths, on January 15th.

#### Future Work.

In concluding this brief statement of the work of our Federation, we wish most earnestly to impress on every member the need for further extending our membership, for increasing the sales of our paper, and for the active and hearty co-operation of every individual member of the E.L.F.S.

Votes were never so much needed by women as they are to-day. It was never before so necessary to the community that women should have the vote.

The East London Federation of the Suffragettes is essentially a working



GETTING READY FOR ACTION.



THE DEPUTATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

## ANNUAL REPORT.

woman's organisation. Let us together make it a powerful force in winning votes for working women and in fighting for the interests of working women in every department of life.

> EVELINA HAVERFIELD. Hon. Treasurer.

NORAH SMYTH, Hon. Financial Secretary.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST, Hon. Secretary.

#### **Our Annual Conference.**

At the E.L.F.S. First Annual Conference, which was held in Bow Baths on January 4th, the report, published in that week's DREADNOUGHT, was unanimously adopted with some slight additions. The constitution was amended as follows :--

- I-That the E.L.F.S. Central Com- contest. mittee consist of-
- (i) The Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Financial Secretary, and six representatives elected at the Annual Conference to represent the Federation as a whole.
- (ii) Representatives of the branches; each branch of 25 members to have one representative, and every branch of more than 50 members to have two representatives.
- 2—That if a general representative resign, a substitute may be coopted by the Committee.
- 3-That if a branch representative resign a substitute be elected at the next meeting of that branch. after it has been announced in the DREADNOUGHT and at a branch meeting.
- 4-That the Finance Committee consist of the Hon. Secretary. Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Financial Secretary; and that the Finance Committee have power to appoint, and, if necessary, to dismiss, organisers.

Out of the large number who were nominated, the following were elected as members of the General Committee. They are placed in the order of the number of votes which they obtained :--

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- 5-That the minimum subscription to the Federation be id. a month, to be called for by officers of the Federation or members appointed to do so.
- 6—That any matter which it is desired shall be discussed by the Federation as a whole shall be notified to the Hon. Secretary three days before the General Meeting at which it is to be brought up.
- 7-That the words on the membership card "to secure the Parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as men" be altered to "to secure the vote for every woman over 21."

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was re-elected as Hon. Secretary, without a contest. Mrs. Haverfield was re-elected as Hon. Treasurer, and Miss Norah Smyth as Hon. Financial Secretary, without a

Mrs. W. Lansbury

Mrs. Drake

Mrs. Moore Mrs. Walker Miss McKay Mrs. Watkins

The six who secured the highest votes of those who were not elected were :--

> Mrs. Parsons Miss Jenkins Mrs. Payne Mrs. McCheyne Mrs. Dove Wilcox Mrs. Schlette

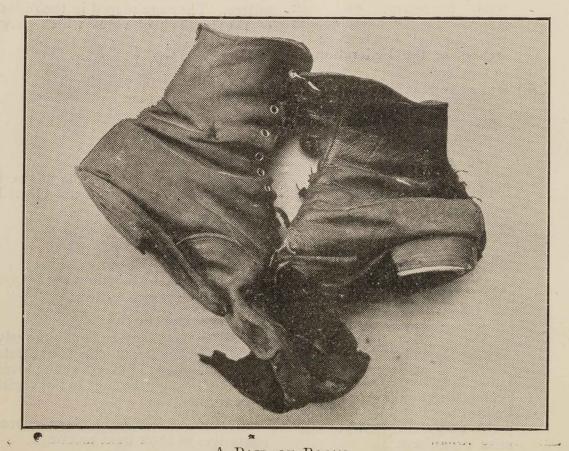
Resolutions were unanimously adopted calling for the immediate enfranchisement of every woman over 21, and sending greetings to Suffragist comrades abroad.

Branches must elect their representatives at their next meetings.

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BABY WEIGHING IN BROMLEY.

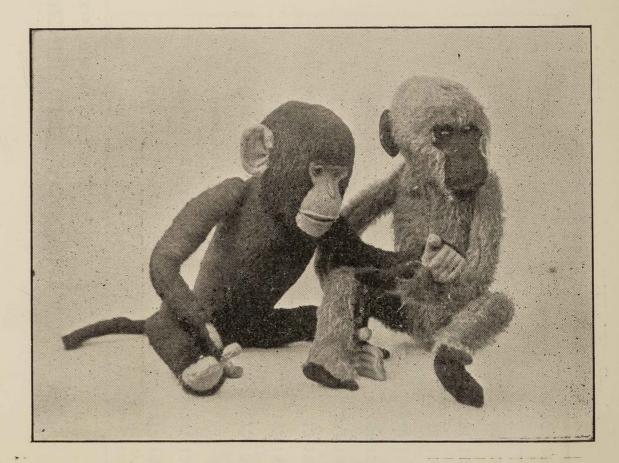


A PAIR OF BOOTS.

ANNUAL REPORT.



BLACK BOYS.



MONKEYS.

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# RECEIPTS JAN. 1914 to JAN. 1915. AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT.

ACCOUNT.

AND EXPENDITURE

RECEIPTS

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SALARIES-Clerical Workers 1 SALARIES-Clerical Workers 1 RESTAURANTS-Food and Wages for Cooking and Waiting	Roap, Bow, E. The Toys may be seen at 400 OLD Ford Roab, Bow, or Illustrated Catalogues are sent on application.	
Donations to Milk and General Distress Work 1,167 7 74 RESTAURANTS—By Meals and Soup 120 13 25 Loans by Members of Committee 493 11 3 *There was alarge amount of stock in hand when the account was made up. A profit has been made on boots and brushes. In con- sidering the results of the toy and garment factory it must be remembered that the main object. during the early months, was to find employment for persons in distress. and a large proportion of the garment were made either to give away or to lend.	Orders for the Toy Factory should be addressed to 45 Norman Roa at 8 Harr STREET, BLOOMSBURY. III	

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And the Mother and Baby Clinics at-53 St. Leonard's Street, Bromley, 20 Railway Street, Poplar, and 55 Fife Road, Canning Town.

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