

THE VOTE,
APRIL 4, 1919.
ONE PENNY.

The Middlesex Council and Women Teachers.

EDITH HOW-MARTYN.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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

WHAT WE EXPECT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

"It will be the duty of the New Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women."

NO SHIRKING !

ELECTION MANIFESTO signed by
MR. LLOYD GEORGE, Prime Minister. **MR. BONAR LAW**, Chancellor of the Exchequer

WOMEN AND THE LAW.

The Press and the general public still show an unabated interest in the opening of the legal profession to women. The Bill enabling women to become barristers and solicitors has now been unanimously and expeditiously passed by the House of Lords; to whom our thanks. It is much to be hoped that women have learnt the lesson of last year, when a very similar favourable situation prevailed with regard to the Solicitors (Qualification of Women) Bill, which was willingly passed by the Lords, and which died—poor infant—because of alleged lack of time in the House of Commons. "Lack of time" is so old and tried an enemy of reform; particularly of those which women need, that women need to be peculiarly on their guard at this juncture. In point of fact the next few weeks—before the Budget—are the most opportune time that is ever likely to occur during the whole lifetime of the present Parliament for the passage of this urgently needed measure.

The Bill is not a Government Bill, but Mr. Bonar Law has promised time for it in the Commons. All organised groups of women, branches of women's societies, and Women Citizens' Associations should at once send letters to their respective Members of Parliament to press for such facilities, and should also communicate directly to the Lord Chancellor, to Mr. Bonar Law, and to Mr. Lloyd George a resolution earnestly asking for the fulfilment of this

pledge at an early date. Delay is exceedingly dangerous; the present favourable opportunity may not recur until some very distant time, and the loss of the Bill now might mean its loss for years.

It is gratifying to note that the absurd proposal mooted from unfriendly quarters of a Fifth Inn for women has apparently received its quietus in the general Press. It was about as hopeful a suggestion as that the women should learn to exist in a Fifth Dimension. Its real purport was to interpose a period of delay for the preparation of such a place, and to nullify, perhaps for years, the practical participation of women in the senior branch of the profession, namely the Bar. Fortunately this pretty little device was so transparent that it was seen through at once.

Our congratulations also to the Law Society on its vote favouring the admission of women to the Solicitorate, which was carried by 50 votes to 33. One member, however, in opposing the motion, thinks that if they "degrade woman to the level of man in earning a living they would do her a good deal of harm." Without commenting upon the Irish nature of this compliment to Mr. Crook's colleagues, one speculates as to the locality of the Rip van Winkle's cave in which this gentleman has apparently managed to shelter himself in these tempestuous latter days. Would it be too inquisitive to inquire of him the venue of this secluded and dreamy spot? It would be so charming a retreat for a rest cure.

HELENA NORMANTON.

TEACHERS ON THE MIDDLESEX EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

Sex Equality Secured after Serious Risk of Injustice to Women.

The Middlesex County Council has just taken the very wise step of electing four teachers among the eight persons who have to be co-opted on the Education Committee. Fortunately two of them are women, but a new injustice to women was only just averted. I want to relate the history of the affair because it shows once again that women have not yet got out of the habit of leaving their interests in the hands of men, with results so familiar to us.

An informal meeting of the Education Committee took place at which the election of co-opted members on the committee was discussed. Among the eight names, which it was agreed to propose at the full public Council meeting two days later, were included the names of three teachers—one woman and two men, the men being representative of Higher Education and the woman of Elementary Education. It was a shock to me to find those who were supporting the proposal had not proposed one man and one woman to represent Higher Education, and I expressed my dissatisfaction to them, and made various suggestions with a view to getting the matter remedied in a friendly way before the public meeting. I also wrote to Sir James Yoxall and the chairman of the Middlesex National Union of Teachers. The former did not reply, while the kind and courteous letter of the latter and his complacent acceptance of the injustice to women teachers only made me more determined that I would move in the matter at the Council meeting. Before the meeting I talked over the matter with those members who had taken up the cause of teacher representation, and one and all advised me to let well alone and to wait until next year and so on—all the cautious, stultifying, stupid arguments suffragists know so well. The councillor who promised to second the amendment I proposed to move was himself opposed to teacher representation! I went into the Council meeting feeling as I used to feel before going into a police-court to protest against men trying women under man-made laws, though I did not expect to be carried out of the chamber, as used sometimes to happen in the police-courts. The chairman ruled my amendment out of order, and for the moment I was nonplussed, as all my efforts to get the name of a representative woman teacher to propose had failed. However, an old member of the Education Committee came to my rescue, and after consultation with him I next proposed that Miss Felvus, the headmistress of the Tottenham Girls' High School, should be elected. In spite of appeals that the names submitted by the Education Committee should be accepted my nominee headed the poll with 44 votes, while the next on the list obtained 30. The result was received with applause, and many members were kind enough to congratulate me very warmly. Those who support the representation of teachers have the satisfaction of knowing that half the co-opted members are teachers, and those of us who support sex equality rejoice that half the teachers are women.

The questions I ask are: What were the women teachers doing to defend their interests and the interests of the girls they teach? I had letters and personal appeals from men, all of which I welcomed as educating me as to their wishes in the matter, but no communications at all from women.

When will women take more interest in the work of the Councils whose decisions affect the conditions of their lives and work? The public meetings are only held monthly, and surely it is not too much to expect that each time at least one gallery of the Middlesex County Hall, Westminster, close to the

Westminster Hospital, shall be packed with women from all parts of Middlesex come to see how their Council conducts their business.

It is only a little victory, and may seem trivial and unimportant, but when we consider that the full tide of equality will be made up of tens of thousands of such victories, then we realise they are not to be underestimated.

Similar and more important victories are just waiting to be won by women who will give up the time to serve on local councils of all kinds. The machinery of government is mainly made up of Parliament, the Government Departments, and the Local Governing Bodies, and if women want to get full equality the best and quickest way of doing it is to get where they have a share in controlling the machinery.

EDITH HOW MARTYN.

NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

We rejoice in the splendid support the nurses gained for the second reading of this Bill in the House of Commons last Friday. In moving its second reading, Major Barnett said that this Bill embodied a reform long overdue, and that one of the clauses provided for a general register of women nurses. Nurses were asking neither for public money nor for charity; they wanted to be a self-supporting and a self-respecting profession. In seconding the motion, Mr. Briant stated that he owed his life to the efficiency of nurses on more than one occasion; everything depended on nursing—if they failed you, your life might be the cost; so that it was essential that all nurses should have proper credentials. Sir Donald Maclean declared that nurses ought to have State assistance, and that a grant of £2,000 a year would be one of the most reproductive expenditures the State could undertake in the training and development of this splendid class of women. Major Molson said he did not ask that this Bill should be passed so much in the interests of nurses as in the interests of the public. To Mr. Lyle it was quite sufficient, when he knew that nurses wanted registration, to say that he would do everything in his power to give them registration. Lieut.-Colonel Raw stated that the medical profession owed an enormous debt of gratitude to the nursing profession; and Parliament and the whole Empire were under a deep debt of gratitude to the nurses for the work which they had performed in attending our wounded soldiers. Mr. F. Roberts appealed for better pay and better conditions for nurses. Mr. Gardiner informed the House that in one particular part of his constituency the nearest doctor was forty-two miles away, and there was no nurse resident within any part of that area. He urged the Government that they should give every possible facility for bringing this Bill into being, as the need for medical treatment in many parts of the country was intense. Sir Watson Cheyne declared that whatever success he had had in his profession had been very largely due to the band of splendid and loyal nurses he had gathered round him. He thought that the remuneration given to nurses was deplorably bad, and he hoped that by raising the status of nurses through registration their remuneration would be improved. Captain Loseby was sure that nurses would find amongst the soldiers and sailors their most ardent sympathisers and supporters. Mr. Bonar Law, on behalf of the Government, said that they were generally in favour of the principle of the Bill. The Bill would be considered by the Standing Committee, and the attitude which the Government would take up when it returned to the House would depend upon its shape then.

We hope that the many supporters of this Bill in the House of Commons will bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the Government to ensure its being passed into law this Session.

A SKETCH OF THE YEAR'S WORK.

To-morrow (Saturday) the Women's Freedom League will hold its Twelfth Annual Conference at Caxton Hall, Westminster, when delegates from our branches in England, Scotland, and Wales will come prepared to discuss and vote on the resolutions and amendments of the Conference Agenda, which will form the basis of the League's policy for the coming year, and they will vote for the members of the National Executive Committee, on whom the responsibility will rest of carrying out that policy.

Since our last Conference many new members have been gained for the League, and branches have been formed at Ashford (Kent), Bath, Bournemouth, Bexhill, Hastings, and Westcliff-on-Sea. We have worked hard through public meetings, special campaigns, Members of Parliament, and by means of the Press, to establish equal pay for equal work in all professions and trades.

From last Easter until December we offered the most uncompromising hostility to the infamous Regulation 40D, and during that time secured the passing of 150 resolutions against it, copies of which were sent to the Prime Minister and every member of the War Cabinet.

When it was urged in the House of Commons that a Penny Postage concession should be granted for letters sent to men serving overseas, we immediately pressed that the same concession should be made in regard to letters forwarded to women serving overseas, and this was granted. We were the first to suggest that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should consider the advisability of appointing women to the Select Committee to prepare schedules for the Luxury Tax. Two women were appointed. They, however, subsequently resigned, but, as the Government found it impossible to carry through the proposals for which the men of this Committee were responsible, we can only congratulate these women on their good sense. Throughout the year we have called the attention of the Government and the public to the desirability of women being allowed to serve on juries, and to the necessity of a woman being appointed to every Magistrates' Bench. Whenever occasion offered we urged the Home Secretary and Members of both Houses of Parliament to restore to British women the right to their own nationality.

We have taken part in a deputation to the Ministry of Food, and also to the Home Secretary on the subject of Penal Law Reform. We attended meetings in the House of Commons of a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament to consider the drafting of a new Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and members both in London and Nottingham have attended police-courts to watch the interests of girls and women. We gave all the support we could to the Solicitors (Qualification of Women) Bill and to the Nurses Registration Bill, lobbying and circulating Members of Parliament for their support of these Bills.

For the last two months we have urged the Government to do away with the anomaly of lumping together the incomes of husband and wife and charging the Income-tax on the joint income, maintaining that each income should be taxed separately. We have also pressed that women should be on the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into Income-tax Law.

With regard to the Ministry of Health, we have at every available opportunity pressed for an equal number of women with men in control of all departments formed under this Ministry, and, above all, that there should be a woman Minister of Health.

For several months before the General Election the Women's Freedom League headquarters became an inquiry office for women all over the country who

found difficulty in getting upon the Parliamentary Register, and, through the help given them at 144, High Holborn, many scores of women were enabled to exercise their vote who otherwise could not have done so.

As soon as the Law Officers of the Crown gave their opinion against women's eligibility to membership of Parliament, we began an agitation to secure legislation by which women would have the right to a seat and a vote in the House of Commons. This right was secured only a week or two before the General Election, but the Women's Freedom League had the good fortune to be able to support three of its members in and around London—Mrs. Despard for Battersea, Miss Phipps for Chelsea, and Mrs. How Martyn for the Hendon Division of Middlesex—as Parliamentary candidates. Unluckily no woman candidate was returned to Parliament in this country, but we hope before very long to see several women members in the House of Commons.

At the County Council elections we supported Mrs. Lamartine Yates's candidature for the London County Council and Mrs. How Martyn's for the Middlesex County Council, both these candidates being successful. Many of our members are this week standing for Boards of Guardians, Parish Councils, and Urban District Councils. The Women's Freedom League has, in season and out of season, urged upon the Government the advisability of women being included in the Peace Conference. We have written to the Prime Minister, President Wilson, M. Clemenceau, Colonel House, Signor Orlando, and Lord Robert Cecil stating reasons why women of all countries should be represented at this Conference. We have also pressed that women should be in the counsels and on any Council that is formed of the League of Nations.

From our last Conference to the present one we have tried by public meetings, through the Press, through Members of Parliament, and through members of the Government to bring women's interests and women's claims to equality with men to the forefront; and we have protested immediately when any Government officials or any body of men have attempted to impose restrictions on women's work which were not to be imposed on men's work, or to limit in any way the sphere of women's activities.

F. A. U.

PRISON REFORM.

On March 28 the Home Secretary at last, after many months of delay, received the important joint deputation organised by the Penal Reform League and representing 23 societies, including the Women's Freedom League (Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck and Dr. Knight) and other suffrage societies, headmistresses, co-operative women, nurses, sanitary inspectors, etc. Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, chairman of the Prison Commission, was also present. The speakers called for intelligent treatment of young offenders, reception houses for prisoners under remand, women police commissioners, and for all women's prisons women governors and medical officers, trained women nurses in all prisons, better sanitation, and the discontinuance of the silence rule, strict solitude, the spy hole, dietary punishment, and unnecessary humiliations.

Mr. Shortt said the last hundred years had seen a reformation in prison methods. He would welcome trained nurses, but the expense was the difficulty. Magistrates should grant bail more readily. As for appointing women to positions of authority, it was a difficult question, and time prevented its discussion, but he would like wider power given to the woman inspector of prisons, and would welcome women visitors if legislation made them possible.

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EDITORIAL.

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UNEMPLOYMENT: A NATIONAL DANGER.

The question of the hour is that of unemployment, the figures of which are continually increasing. It is naturally the question of the unemployment of women which perturbs us the more, but it is not difficult to see that, at the present time, the problem of unemployment is not, in the main, affected by sex. According to the last figures, we have approximately a million unemployed persons in the country, whose out of work donation amounts to about £1,200,000 weekly, and of these rather over the half are women and girls. The test of unemployment, or rather the conditions under which the unemployment donation is granted, is whether the Employment Agencies can place the applicant. If the applicant refuses the job offered the Exchange officer may suspend the donation, and a Court of Referees, drawn from a panel of employers and workmen's representatives, decides whether the refusal was justifiable. From this decision the applicant has the right to appeal to an umpire. A case has recently come into the court concerning a girl of 19, who, until last November, was employed at iron works at £1 a week. The Exchange stopped her out-of-work donation because she refused work as a domestic servant in Ireland at £12 a year with board and lodging. She appealed from the decision of the referees, urging that she was not accustomed to the work, but the umpire upheld the decision of the Court of Referees. A decision of this nature might press heavily both on the applicant and her new employer, who might have a most unsuitable domestic help provided for her on these lines.

On March 26, the Minister of Labour, Sir Robert Horne, received a deputation from the National Federation of General Workers and the National Federation of Women Workers. The deputation was introduced by Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., who pointed out that it represented a million organised workers. He said that war had imposed upon women greatly changed conditions. They found themselves installed permanently in the industrial affairs of the country, and had now much greater difficulty in finding work than the average man had. He insisted that the Government should take immediate steps to organise schemes of useful work and training for women, and this point was further pressed home by Miss Madeline Symons, of the National Federation of Women Workers. On Saturday last, deputa-

tions from these bodies were received by Mr. Bonar Law, and resolutions which were passed at the recent Albert Hall meeting were submitted for his consideration. The interview lasted for two hours. Mr. Bromley, Assistant Secretary of the Parliamentary Trade Union Congress Committee, said that the chief grievances of the deputation were the unemployment among women workers and the fact that unemployment benefit had been stopped in cases when women had refused work at a sweated wage. Miss Mary Carkin said that there was a large body of women now unemployed who would not accept a sweated wage. To this Mr. Bonar Law replied that it was not the intention of the Government to stop the unemployment donation to women who refused sweated labour. He declared the whole policy of the Government to be against such a system. He also said that schemes for the temporary employment of women clerks were under consideration.

It cannot be denied that, as Sir Robert Horne told the earlier deputation, peace conditions naturally differ from those which obtained during the war, when there was an urgent demand and "orders were illimitable." Now there was no demand at all, and, while the price did not matter during war time (!), the price now mattered to everybody. He probably meant there was no market, for there is certainly a great demand for the things of everyday life which have been produced in minute quantities during the last four and a-half years. But, if there is not work at this moment of transition for everyone, would it not be better, as the deputation proposed, to train the younger workers of both sexes, calling their out-of-work donation a maintenance allowance. Great insistence is laid upon the necessity of increased production in the future, but does the Government show a parallel anxiety to prepare for that increased production as it did to provide armaments in a time of national emergency? No one will be bold enough to deny the difficulties of the situation, and these appear to fall under two heads: (1) Those which pertain to the present season of disorganisation and nervousness; and (2) those connected with the future, the restarting of industry and the bearing of the great financial burdens which the country has to sustain. Government utterances seem to issue from a region of perplexity, gloom, and sometimes even of despair. It is clear from them that, notwithstanding the Reconstruction Committees, it is as unprepared for peace as it was for war.

Men and women have a right to life and to work as the means of life, and out-of-work donations can only be a temporary expedient. The demobilisation of the Army will, under existing circumstances, accelerate the present evils. While the Government has refused to organise schemes of work and to use the national factories for productive purposes, it is, at the same time, placing embargoes on raw material entering the country, and on the finished products leaving it—a policy which must tend to lessen production and to increase unemployment.

Men and women are not only demanding work. They are demanding better conditions of life and labour, shorter hours and higher wages, etc. As *The Times* recently asserted, "The country is content no more with pre-war conditions." A great national effort was needed to provide the armaments of war in a national emergency of great gravity. The condition of the body politic to-day shows symptoms of very grave portent, and, to deal with the situation, the most serious condition of which is unemployment, it may be as necessary to make a national effort on a large scale, as it was in those dark days when the labour resources of the country were placed at its service to provide the weapons of its defence. E. M. N. C.

"PASSED, WITHOUT A DIVISION!"

These magic words were repeated again and again to themselves and to one another by a large number of trained nurses on Friday, March 28, when "the ayes had it" in the House of Commons, at the second reading of the Bill for their State Registration drafted by the Central Committee. One hundred or more nurses were present in the Members' and the Ladies' Galleries. Permission to occupy the former is a concession since women became enfranchised. We listened eagerly to the splendid speech of Major Barnett as he moved the second reading, and the subsequent speeches of other Members, and realised that the pulse of the House was, except for negligible opposition, beating for us. Indeed, we could hardly refrain from vociferous applause, but we had given an undertaking in writing to behave very properly (!), so we remained in a state of tense and suppressed excitement. When we reached the Courtyard we told a policeman—we were obliged to tell somebody at once, to let off the steam. Then we told other people with whom we were not in the habit of speaking! How could we be conventional on such an occasion. Afterwards we went to have tea, and we continued to tell one another all about it, because it really seemed too good to be true. Some were even too happy to sleep that night!

It is no uncommon thing for a Bill to pass the second reading without a division truly; but this was the Bill—it was *our* Bill—for which we had worked and waited and hoped so many years. Our disappointments had been many and grievous, but we had never lost hope. Our struggle for professional freedom has been very similar to the long, weary battle that all suffragists have had to fight for the political enfranchisement of women. Nothing can kill the spirit of liberty in the ardent soul. The story of our campaign is history, the first chapter of which has been written, we have now made another. Let me remind you, dear readers, that, although you have not known it, our battle and our partial victory have been for you quite as much as for ourselves and for the defenceless sick.

Friends, Britons, countrywomen, lend me your ears. In 1887 a little group of zealous women belonging to the nursing profession met in a doctor's house and made proposals for the organisation and standardisation of nursing, where all was chaos and disorder. Self-governing societies were formed, and its members got to work—the hard spade work we all know so well—the enlightenment of the ignorant, the breaking down of prejudices, and the showing up of abuses. The toughest part of all has been to prove, fearlessly and constantly, the right of the nurses to govern themselves under a properly constituted authority, like all other professions in a country claiming to be free and civilised. The pioneers soon realised that the first thing necessary was to give the public a statutory definition of the term "trained nurse"; and they knew that the only way to accomplish this was to establish a system of registration by Act of Parliament similar to that in force in the case of the medical profession. The first society to be founded to this end was the British Nurses' Association, afterwards incorporated by Royal Charter under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, and is now known as the Royal British Nurses' Association. This method of incorporation being the most ancient and honourable by which this privilege can be obtained, we are naturally proud of it; moreover, this is the only association of women, as far as we know, possessing the privilege. Strengthened with this prestige, the reform movement grew rapidly. It became the pioneer movement, and gained adherents not only in this country, but in many others, besides many of our Colonies. The rulers of the other countries proved more gene-

rous and hospitable to the new idea than those of our own—to our shame be it said—with the result that in 46 States of America, in three Provinces of Canada, besides other Overseas Dominions and some European countries, Acts for State Registration are in force. Nevertheless we do not envy them; we rejoice with them, and now, with a partial victory won, and its completion within the grasp of the hopeful, our turn for rejoicing has come.

For fourteen consecutive years a Bill has been introduced into the House of Commons. The last time was just before the war broke out, when, under the Ten Minutes' Rule, it was brought in, and a division showed a majority of 229. A Select Committee of the House of Commons, which sat during two sessions (1904 and 1905), decided in favour of the principle. In 1908 a Bill, similar in principle to the one now before the House, passed through the House of Lords without a division, and was supported by the Government.

Do you ask why we were so tantalised?

We know, but we would rather not say, because:

"Who will count the billows past,
When the shore is gained at last."

And so it has come to pass that, at the expenditure of enormous energy, ceaseless labours, great watchfulness for "breakers ahead" (!) undying hopefulness, exemplified especially in our leaders, not to mention large sums of money contributed out of our own pockets, our Bill has at last passed the second reading without a division. But the tug-of-war (the Committee stage) has yet to come, and we rely upon our good friends of the Women's Freedom League, who have always been so encouraging, to extend their good fellowship in the crisis ahead of us before complete victory is achieved by the Bill passing safely through the remaining stages and reaching the Statute Book. BEATRICE KENT.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

A very interesting account was given on March 26 by Miss Raleigh of "Usurpation: How Men Took Women's Work." The Hon. Mrs. FORBES, from the chair, pointed out that women did a great deal of work in the Church and elsewhere for which men received the credit. Industrial women must form their own trade unions.

Miss RALEIGH said that real men, men who were fair all round and played the game, were not jealous of women. Work had a double value: it was a pleasure and a means of living. Many men considered that the pleasure alone should satisfy women. The root idea of "women's work" was something that could be done in or near the home while looking after the children. This included agriculture, "an axe to the boy, a hoe to the girl"; sewing, spinning, weaving, cooking. Men's work was what had to be done farther afield—hunting, fishing, fighting, exploring. When men are also obliged to stay at home they gladly turn to "women's work," as sewing and embroidering by wounded soldiers. There is no sex in work; it is the conditions under which it can be done that determine who is to do it.

Men have in modern times taken women's work away from them—weaving, spinning, tailoring, even the higher branches of cooking. In mediæval

A BOOK FOR ENFRANCHISED WOMEN.

THE FEMININE IN FICTION.

(Allen and Unwin. 3s. 6d. net.) By L. A. M. PRIESTLEY (Mrs. GEO. McCracken), with a Foreword by Mrs. Despard. "The work could not have been more effectively done... the book forms a real tribute to the generally advanced and friendly tone of English Novelists."—*Daily News* review. "A series of clever little studies."—*The Scotsman*. On Sale at Women's Freedom League Literature Dept., 144, High Holborn, W.C.

times there were guilds for trades in many towns, and all trade guilds were open to women members. A married woman member was still free in industry. A widow member who married again could make her husband free. Bell casters, barber-surgeons, brewers, butchers, etc., all had their women guild members. The Guild of Silk Women was later replaced by the Guild of Silk Men. Survivals of some of these old trade guilds are seen in the City Companies. The Guild of Merchant Adventurers has one woman fellow, Miss Edith Sellers, who arranged the archives of the Company. History books say very little about women, but people only find what they look for, and historians do not consider women important, and leave them out. Deborah filled the office of judge. In Greece and in Egypt the priestesses were as important as the priests. Many sects have professed great equality for women and men, but it often means that both sexes are free to make sacrifices, give their time, and become ascetics, but that the emoluments belong only to one. If gratuitous work affords such a high privilege, let us for a change have salaried parish workers and voluntary vicars. Women were asked to come forward and do war work, and now the expert women engineers are being ousted by men. Other women were engaged as engineers and then told they were to be employed on clerical work.

Members of the Women's Freedom League and Local Governing Bodies

Mrs. Nevinson, after fifteen years' service, and having contested several elections, has been returned unopposed to the Hampstead Board of Guardians.

Mrs. Smith, after eight years' service, and having contested three elections, has been returned unopposed to the Brighton Board of Guardians.

Miss Tooke, after many years' service, is contesting a seat for the Gateshead Board of Guardians.

Miss Margaret Hodge is a candidate for the Hampstead Garden Suburb Urban District Council, and is being put forward by the Labour Party. The following fine record of long service to the community will show how well qualified Miss Margaret Hodge is as candidate for the Hendon Urban District Council:—

Margaret Hodge, trained and certificated teacher; teacher in an elementary school in London; lecturer at the first secondary training college for teachers, 1885-1897; educational tour in Germany, 1891-2; Head of a training college and joint principal of a school in Sydney, 1897-1908; tour through Japan and U.S.A., lecturing and studying social conditions, 1908-1909; lecturer for the L.C.C. to teachers, 1910-1912; Hon. Sec. to the Paddington Women's Local Government Association, 1910-1912; lecturing tour through all the Provinces of South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, 1912-1914; visit to Canada, visiting schools and institutions, 1914, lecturing and teaching; teaching and lecturing during the war, and helping in various forms of war work; journalistic work in the Dominions Overseas and in London; Hon. Sec. of Indian Section of British Dominions Women's Citizens' Union from 1917; resident in the Garden Suburb for five years.

Miss Anna Munro is a candidate for the Thatcham Parish Council, and is being run by the British Women's Temperance Association.

Mrs. Williams and Miss Patty Hamer are running as independent candidates, supported by the Women's Freedom League, with Miss Alix Clark acting as election agent, for the Newtown and Llanwchrair Wards of the Urban District Council.

Mrs. Mockford is standing as Poor Law Guardian for Dulwich, and Mrs. Bell for Gateshead. Miss Helen G. Whitton as Independent candidate for the Urban District Council, Orrell (West Ward).

To one and all of these members we send our heartiest good wishes.

THE WEEK IN PARLIAMENT.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON INCOME-TAX.—On March 27 the view has been expressed in Parliament by constitution of this Commission—twenty-three men (including the secretary) and one woman, Mrs. Lilian Knowles. Needless to say, we consider that one woman as against twenty-three men is a most inadequate representation of women's interests, and this view has been expressed in Parliament by both Mr. G. Locker-Lampson and Mr. Donald Macmaster. We are glad to see that 200 Members of the present House of Commons are convinced of the injustice of lumping together the incomes of husband and wife and levying Income-tax on the joint amount. If a man and woman were not married, and each had an income of £129, no Income-tax would be charged; but if they marry an Income-tax is charged on £258. This is surely a penalty on marriage; and, in spite of protests from Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Bonar Law against insistent demands from Members of Parliament to remove this anomaly before the Commission has issued its report, we trust our friends in the House of Commons will continue to press the Government to get this grievance remedied in the coming Finance Bill.

MISS DOUGLAS-PENNANT.—Brigadier-General Sir OWEN THOMAS asked the Secretary of State for War whether he had consulted the Prime Minister with regard to the publication of the report of the inquiry made by Mr. Harmsworth, at the Prime Minister's request, into the circumstances surrounding the summary dismissal of Miss Violet Douglas-Pennant from the commandantship of the Women's Royal Air Force. Mr. CHURCHILL replied that he had consulted both the Prime Minister and Mr. Harmsworth; that the report was written as a confidential paper for the personal information of the Prime Minister, and that, in the interest of the public service, there was the strongest objection to the publication of such a document. In our opinion, so far as we have information, there should be a public inquiry into the whole circumstances of Miss Douglas-Pennant's dismissal, and that women should be among the investigators in this case.

WELFARE CLUBS FOR UNEMPLOYED WOMEN.—In reply to a question asked by Sir Samuel Hoare, the Minister of Labour (Sir ROBERT HORNE) stated that clubs for unemployed women had occupied the attention of the welfare officers of the Ministry of Labour throughout the period of demobilisation, and in every one of the chief towns arrangements had been made for such clubs to be open all day and every evening for the use of women and girls receiving out-of-work donation. Information respecting openings for employment and for training was given at these clubs, and arrangements were being made to increase the use of clubs for this purpose. Many of the clubs were close to the Employment Exchanges, and had been the means of preventing queues and keeping the applicants for out-of-work donation occupied. In addition to this, schemes of recreation for adults, inaugurated by the Ministry of Munitions Welfare Section, in conjunction with the Home Office Juvenile Organisation Committees, were being carried on for unemployed women.

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY.—In reply to a question asked by Colonel Ashley, Sir Arthur Boscawen said that the Women's Land Army was recruited for the period ending October 31, 1919. To secure the services of 5,000 additional workers the Employment Exchanges of the Ministry of Labour were being utilised, and the enrolment would be effected by the selection boards of the Women's County Committees in co-operation with these Exchanges.

The present Land Army, with the 5,000 additional recruits, would be equipped, maintained, and organised in a manner similar to that which had obtained since its inception. It had already been arranged that the preferential facilities offered to the ex-Service men for settling on the land should be extended, with safeguards, to the women of the Land Army.

Emancipation of Women.

As the framing of the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Bill, for which the Labour Party have secured first place for to-day's sitting, may present insuperable difficulties, it may be dropped in favour of the Women's Emancipation Bill, for which Mr. Spoor, of the same party, obtained second place. The chief provisions of this Bill are as follows:—

1. To give women the vote on the same terms as men.
2. To make women eligible to hold any public office.
3. To enable women to sit and vote in the House of Lords and to vote for the election of representative peers to the House of Lords.

EASTER RECESS.—In reply to Sir Philip Magnus, Mr. Bonar Law said that he hoped the House would be able to adjourn on Tuesday or Wednesday, April 15 or 16, till Tuesday, April 29.

F. A. U.

THE HEALTH BILL. Committee Stage.

March 25.—Mr. T. GRIFFITHS moved an amendment that of the members of all Consultative Councils a substantial number should be women. He hoped the Government would go still further and give equality of treatment to women, and that they would be given equal numbers to the men on these Consultative Councils. He considered this a women's Bill because women would have to administer it.

Dr. ADDISON was very sorry that he seemed to be always objecting to women on the Councils. Nobody had made more use of women both in Munitions and in Reconstruction, but some Councils or their sub-committees would be concerned with highly technical questions of building, finance, surveying, costings, and quantities, and unfortunately there were not yet any women surveyors or costing accountants. He did not want his hands to be tied. Women would be appointed on the Councils in the same way as men.

The amendment was withdrawn.

Mr. THORNE moved an amendment that one at least of the assistant secretaries of the Health Minister shall be a woman.

MAJOR ASTOR detailed the policy of the department in connection with the appointments and the use proposed to be made of women. They were to be on all the Councils, and in large numbers on the General Council; they would be represented on special sub-committees of the Councils dealing with special subjects.

But Dr. Addison had gone further than this; he had already appointed to a high position in the Local Government Board, with a special eye to the Ministry of Health, Dr. Janet Campbell, for many years medical officer of the Board of Education. It might have been said that the care of school children should have been put under a woman. (*Of course it should.*) It was quite possible, if that had been done, that the medical inspection and treatment of school children might not have been developed to the same extent as had been done under Sir George Newman. (*It is also possible that it might have reached a still higher pitch of excellence.*) The whole tendency was to abolish sex distinction and to go by merit. *They did intend to use women as far as they could whenever they found one of them suitable for the particular purpose.*

Mr. THORNE then withdrew his amendment in favour of one which provided that in the appointing

of secretaries and officials no sex discrimination should be made between men and women. Dr. Addison declared the amendment to be quite unnecessary and even harmful to the interests of women. He had just discriminated in favour of a woman by appointing Dr. Campbell to be the head of the woman's branch of the Medical Department because she was a woman. (*Is this another way of saying because she was the best person for the position?*)

Dr. MURRAY rather supported the amendment as a useful protection to men in the near future, and it was carried by 26 to 22.

March 27 was an Irish day. The Bill provides that the Minister of Health for Ireland shall be the Chief Secretary for Ireland, assisted by an Irish Public Health Council, consisting of Local Government Board Commissioners, Insurance Commissioners, the Registrar-General, four doctors, of whom one must be a woman and another is the chairman of the Council, and six other persons of practical experience. The number of women upon the Council will thus probably be extremely small.

Mr. DEVLIN and Sir ALFRED WARREN urged their claims as "persons of practical experience," but competition for places in this section of the Council will be very keen.

The Bill was returned to the House of Commons for its Report stage.

Women's Freedom League.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, April 4.—National Executive Committee Meeting, 144, High Holborn, 2.30 p.m.

Saturday, April 5th.—Women's Freedom League Annual Conference. Caxton Hall, 10 a.m.

Sunday, April 6.—Reception to delegates and friends, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3.30 to 5 p.m. Tea. Short speeches.

Wednesday, April 9.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. A. M. Krougliakoff (member of Petrograd Bar, Russia), on "Russia and the League of Nations." Chair: Miss Florence Underwood. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café.

Thursday, April 10.—Golder's Green Branch Meeting, at 13, Temple Fortune-court, at 8.15 p.m.

Saturday April 12.—Meeting for members and friends to discuss report on resolutions passed at Annual Conference and the immediate work of the Women's Freedom League, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Dance arranged by the Golder's Green Branch at the Institute, Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb (nearest station Golder's Green Tube), 7-11 p.m. (Fancy Dress Optional). Tickets 2s. 6d. (including refreshments), from Miss Dickeson, 59, Ashbourne-avenue, N.W. 4.

Wednesday, April 30.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Whish. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café.

Thursday, May 1.—Middlesex County Council Meeting, 4.15 p.m., at Guildhall, Westminster.

PROVINCES.

Monday, April 7.—Middlesbrough. Jumble Sale at All Saints' Schoolroom, 3 p.m. Goods to be sent to 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road, or collected if desired.

Westcliff Branch Meeting, at the Labour Hall, 6, Broadway Market, Southend, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. M. W. Nevinson. Subject: "Women and the Law."



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BE FREE.

FRIDAY,
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1919.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

National Union of Teachers' Conference, Cheltenham, Easter 1919

Hon. Organiser, ALIX M. CLARK.

The Women's Freedom League are running a campaign in Cheltenham during the Conference. "Equal Pay for Equal Work!" will be the battle cry. A teachers' number of THE VOTE will be issued dealing with special educational subjects. An appeal is made to all members, friends, and teachers who have so generously supported this campaign in the past to renew their support and sympathy this year. Please send your cheques, Treasury Notes, postal orders, and offers of service to Alix M. Clark, The Hut, Newtown, Montgomery Boroughs.

Women's Freedom League Correspondence with the Government.

The following letters have been despatched to Ministers of State by the Secretary of the Women's Freedom League:—

Rt. Hon. E. Shortt, M.P.,

Home Office, S.W. 1.

March 28, 1919.

Sir,—We were surprised to hear you state this morning to a deputation from the Penal Reform League (on which deputation the Women's Freedom League was represented) that you failed to understand why Mr. Bros did not grant bail in the case of Ellen Sullivan, on whom, and on her child, an inquest was held in Holloway Prison a little while ago.

We have a letter from the Home Office, Ref. 375,098/14, dated March 4, and signed by N. B. Simpson, in regard to Ellen Sullivan, and the writer says:—

"I am to add that the Secretary of State, having made inquiry into the facts of the case, is satisfied that the magistrate had good reason for remanding the girl in custody instead of admitting her to bail."

May we ask what further facts have come to light to make you alter your mind with reference to Mr. Bros' refusal to grant bail to Ellen Sullivan, especially as it has been pointed out to you that the girl's mother pleaded hard with the magistrate that bail should be allowed?

We are still of opinion that the death of Ellen Sullivan and her baby was due entirely to the callousness or the stupidity of the magistrate, and we again ask that a public inquiry be held thoroughly to investigate this case.

We have also pointed out to you that Ellen Sullivan's case is only one of a long series in which magistrates' blunders in regard to persons on remand have had disastrous results, and we repeat our request to you to receive a deputation from the Women's Freedom League to discuss with you the whole question of the treatment of persons on remand.

Rt. Hon. J. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.,

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Treasury, S.W. 1.

March 28, 1919.

Sir,—The Women's Freedom League is extremely disappointed to note that one woman only, apparently with merely academic qualifications, has been appointed to the Royal Commission to inquire into the Income-tax, whereas twenty-three men are on this Commission, representing Treasury officials, chartered accountants, bankers, the Labour Party, etc.

May we urge you again to consider the advisability of appointing practical women to this Commission—women accountants, business women, and others—to safeguard women's interests during this inquiry, and, if possible, to arrange that such women are nominated by women's organisations? I can assure you that women do not feel that they are being treated fairly by the present appointments made to this Commission.

Copy of letter sent to members of the Royal Commission to inquire into the Income-tax law:—

March 28, 1919.

Dear Sir,—With reference to the Income-tax Commission to which you have been appointed, may we draw your attention to the article, written by Mrs. Ayres Purdie, appearing on the front page of THE VOTE, which we venture to enclose?

We urge you to press for the removal of the Income-tax anomaly by which the incomes of husband and wife are added together and a tax imposed on their joint incomes, instead of treating them separately for the purposes of taxation. We submit that this is a penalty tax on legal marriage and an infringement of the Married Women's Property Act. Moreover, a woman, whether married or unmarried, should have control of her own income and be held responsible for the tax upon it.

We trust that you will kindly give this matter your earnest consideration.

Miss A. Maude Royden will preach at the City Temple next Sunday, April 6, at the 6.30 service. Subject: "Trust in God."

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WANTED, Organiser for the Women's Freedom League.—Apply, by letter only, giving full particulars, to the SECRETARY, Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, W.C.

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