

***Federation of Women  
Civil Servants***

***REPORT***

***for the year ending March 31st  
1923***



***Office :***

***18, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1***

***(Side Entrance 17 Russell Sq.)***

## OBJECTS

1. To protect and promote the common interests of Women in the Civil Service.
2. To remove the artificial restrictions placed on their employment.
3. To secure that their remuneration for services rendered shall not be differentiated by reason of sex.
4. To secure the free and unfettered admission of women to all appointments in the Service.
5. To secure the removal of the civil and political disabilities of women.

# Federation of Women Civil Servants.

REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 31st, 1923.

### How we Stand.

**T**HE past year has seen the rise of the Institute of Public Administration; the fall of the bonus; the closing stages of Reorganization; the gradual realization by the Treasury that the Resolution of August 5th, 1921, really meant what it said, and the consequent appointment of the Seniority Committee and the announcement of women's eligibility for the forthcoming Tax Inspectorate examination; the competitions for Higher Posts for women; Official advances towards an increase of hours; Staff pressure steadily maintained for re-establishment of an Arbitration Board; the exacerbation of the Lytton Entrants' case; and the Sports Council's consolidation of its position and extension of its activities. In all these matters the Federation is more or less intimately concerned.

### The Institute of Public Administration.

The Institute of Public Administration, open equally to men and women of the requisite qualifications for membership or associateship, has already many of our members on its roll.

The Hon. Secretary has served on the Interim Council and on two of its sub-committees—the General Purposes Committee and the Membership Committee. As we go to press, we learn that she has now been elected to the Permanent Council as a Members' representative and also as an Associates' representative.

### Reorganization.

**THE POST OFFICE.**—At long last the Post Office reorganization scheme is completed, and it is possible to compare the results in the four Departments. It is interesting to note that in the Accountant General's Department (first of all Departments to employ women) the situation shows promising features, and the London Telephone Service has also some satisfactory points. The Savings Bank Department scheme, however, after more than a year of hard-fought Whitley meetings, remains a deplorably unsatisfactory arrangement, and the Money Order Department as reorganized is little better.

The most striking note of all the schemes is the difference in the number of higher posts allotted to men and women respectively. This is due to two causes: (1) the fact that the men already assimilated to the Executive Grade are more than enough to fill the posts graded as Executive; and (2) the deep-grown conviction of the Official Side that work done by women must be clerical.

The increase in the number of Writing Assistants is also very disquieting, and in the case of the Money Order Department nearly caused a rejection of the whole scheme.

All the schemes have been agreed to, but with very strong reservations which leave the various Staff Sides free to reopen discussion at a later date.

**THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR.**—This also has at last its reorganization scheme for the Headquarters Departments, signed on December 22nd, 1922, the Provincial Offices of the Employment and Insurance Department scheme having been dated March 15th, 1921. In the Provincial Scheme a differentiation between men's and women's salaries, previously non-existent in many of the old grades, was introduced, the Staff Side placing on record "their opinion that the settlement does not do justice to the women officers at present serving in the Department." The Headquarters Scheme gives a very small proportion of posts to women serving in the Headquarters offices, except in the Trade Boards Division and at Kew where most of the Finance Headquarters staff is housed.

#### The Seniority Committee.

In April the Treasury appointed a representative Committee "to examine and report on the principle of common seniority lists for men and women." This has held eight sittings, and the two Federation representatives have put forward the women's case with constructive ability. The Report has not yet been presented.

#### Competitions for Higher Posts.

In the autumn examinations of women were held for the three vacancies in the Junior Administrative Grade and for the score or so of vacancies in the Executive and Higher Clerical Grade. From this latter examination the Permanent women were exempt, in view of the standard of the original examination they had already passed; and there is no doubt that the examination results last autumn were a minor consideration in the candidates' success or otherwise, the written applications, testimonials, etc. (i.e., the past experience of candidates) and the impressions of the Selection Boards being chief factors. The disabilities of Post Office candidates in the matter of obtaining testimonials were the subject of urgent representations by the Federation, but we fear the concession thus obtained came, in some cases, too late. Altogether, 371 women entered for the competition for the Administrative Grade, and 1,652 for the other. Of the successful candidates, five were pre-war Permanent women and four of these were members of the Federation, one of the two Higher Executive officers being our Hon. Secretary.

#### Transfers.

The Federation's representations in the early months of 1922 in regard to better notification of vacancies in the Departments have borne fruit, and on the whole the transfer situation is somewhat easier; but a much greater fluidity of personnel is still desirable. This need was emphasized by Lord Milner in his address to the Institute of Public Administration on March 20th, 1923.

#### The Resolution of August 5th, 1921.

Despite the appointment of the Treasury Seniority Committee and the prospect of an equal entry competition for the Tax Inspectorate next July, the Equality Resolution of the House in 1921 is still largely non-operative. In the various Departments women are far, as yet, from having secured equal opportunity with men in the higher ranks; and the state of things in the Pensions Ministry, where, according to a Parliamentary Answer of March 27th, 1923, fifty-three non-Service men have been promoted to the rank of Principal Clerk or over, as against no woman above Higher Executive, is but typical of the practice throughout the Service of excluding women from posts of a purely executive character. Much yet remains to be done to implement that potentially valuable Resolution.

#### In the House.

We have again to thank very warmly our good friends in Parliament for the ready courtesy with which they take up our points and press our case at Question time. Seniority and segregation, grading, redundant officers, overtime, higher posts, ex-First Class Clerks, and Women Establishment Officers have been among the subjects thus dealt with.

#### Lady Astor's At Homes.

And again we gratefully acknowledge the valuable opportunities afforded us by Lady Astor, M.P., in the political "At Homes" to which she invites representative men and women, thus providing the means for expert discussion of important points and disentanglement of misunderstanding. Here, at leisure, as on the Consultative Committee at high pressure, busy professional women of various interests can find means for adjusting their scale of values, and for appraising the outlook of other minds upon their own special problems.

#### The General Election.

In the General Election last autumn, such help as our members could give was mostly concentrated in the Brentford Division, where our very good friend, Mrs. Oliver Strachey, was standing as an Independent candidate. It is gratifying to know that, though unfortunately not successful, she polled 6,541 more votes than in 1918. The Federation organized a well attended meeting in Chiswick Parish Hall a week before the poll, which both candidates were invited to address; Mrs. Strachey alone availing herself of the opportunity and answering questions with a straightforward sincerity rare on such occasions and the more keenly appreciated.

Also we wrote to the provincial press letters in support of candidates of all parties who had shown active sympathy with the women's cause.

#### The National Whitley Council.

On the creation of vacancies on the National Whitley Council, due to the withdrawal of the Temporary Staffs' representatives, the Federation made application for two of the three seats thus vacated, but the Council decided to fill the vacancies from the groups already represented.

#### The Civil Service Dinner.

The Federation took part in the Annual Dinner in February, 1923, arranged, as before, by the Society of Civil Servants and attended by H.R.H. The Duke of York as guest of Honour and by the Diplomatic Corps as distinguished visitors.

**Dinner to Miss Quanjer.**

The Federation representatives attended a pleasant little function on March 1st, when the women of the International Committee of the Society of Civil Servants entertained to dinner at the Forum Club the Civil Service lecturer of the evening, Miss Frederika Quanjer, from The Hague.

**Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act.**

The Federation has sent representatives to women's public demonstrations on two occasions. The first was in November, 1922, when the Six Point Group organized a Protest Meeting against the evasions of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, on which occasion Dr. Winifred Cullis spoke brilliantly on the Civil Service aspect of the matter.

**Equal Franchise.**

The second was in March, 1923, when an enormous contingent of our members supported the Equal Franchise Demonstration at the Central Hall, organized by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and addressed by the two women M.P.'s and other representative speakers.

**Resignation of Assistant Secretary.**

During the past year Miss K. Anderson, the Assistant Secretary, resigned and went to Welwyn Garden City to study poultry-farming under the Co-operative Society there. She had seen the Federation through many strenuous periods—through the setting up of Whitley machinery and the stormy days preceding and following the Reorganization Report, where her organizing ability, her untiring energy, and her perseverance in public action in face of many obstacles proved invaluable. We feel sure that the energy and enthusiasm she brought to her work will stand her in good stead in her new calling in which we wish her every success.

**Council and Committee Meetings.**

There have been three meetings of the Council and eleven ordinary and three special meetings of the Executive Committee during the year.

The sub-Committee on Superannuation held three sittings, Seniority six, Organization two.

The Committee on Superannuation, attended also by representatives of the Society of Civil Servants and of the Standing Joint Committee of Higher Women in the Civil Service, at its three meetings considered the question in all its aspects, and in July the Federation issued a statement which was subsequently in *Opportunity* and in the *Civilian*.

**New Constituent Associations.**

Two more constituent bodies have joined us, one a newly-formed Association of Writing Assistants and the other of the Crown Agents' Women Clerks and Typists.

**"At Home" to Promoted Women.**

In February, 1923, the Executive of the Federation were "At Home" at the Pioneer Club to the women who had received appointments on the Competitions for Higher Posts and to other recent promotees. The Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Organizer of the Federation, and the President of the Association of

Principal Clerks and Deputy Superintendents in the Ministry of Health, spoke briefly on the proposal to extend the latter body so as to embrace all Higher Women in the Service (Treasury Classes), a proposal which is taking shape as we go to press.

**Sport.**

The Federation was early in the field when the organization of Civil Service sport was seriously taken in hand. At a Committee called together in May, 1922, by our Hon. Organizer, Miss K. Cassin was elected to be our representative on the Civil Service Sports Council, and the Federation led the way, subsequently followed by very distinguished persons, in presenting to that body challenge trophies for annual competition—a massive silver shield for women's swimming and a silver cup for women's hockey. The shield was presented in September to the Money Order Department Ladies' Swimming Association, and the Cup Final was to be competed for between the Money Order Department and the Savings Bank Department Women's Hockey Teams on April 7th, 1923.

**The Women's Freedom League Fair.**

Once again the Federation Stall was a conspicuous feature at the Women's Freedom League Fair, held at the Central Hall on November 10th and 11th, and our sales there and in the Departments realized over £100 for the Hundred Thousand Shillings Fund.

**The Federation Calendar.**

This year's demand for the Calendar outpaced the supply, so popular was the combination of design and verse, and many hundreds were disposed of before all purchasers were satisfied. Departmental and *Civilian* comment was pleasantly appreciative.

**Relations with other Organizations.**

*The Society of Civil Servants.* Proposals for affiliation to the Society of Civil Servants were discussed early in 1922, but it was eventually decided to remain for the present unattached.

*The National Federation of Postal and Telegraph Clerks.* Overtures were made to us in July by the National Federation of Postal and Telegraph Clerks in regard to their desire to affiliate their women members to this Federation. Two conferences were held, but so far no decision has been reached. Negotiations are still pending.

*The Association of Principal Clerks and Assistant Superintendents in the Post Office.* A conference has been held with representatives of the Association of Principal Clerks and Assistant Superintendents with a view to their affiliation to us, but they decided to remain in the meantime as at present.

*The National Council of Women.* Two Federation representatives attended the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women at Cambridge last year, but, owing to the immensely long programme and agenda, our resolution was not reached. This was very disappointing, and it is to be hoped that a better organization of the Council's business this year at Edinburgh may secure the inclusion of all resolutions.

The General Secretary is a member of both the Legislation Committee and the Industrial and Professional Committee of the Council, and has attended their meetings throughout the year.

*The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.* The General Secretary was able to attend the greater part of the sittings of the Annual Council of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, in March, 1923, and at various times their Committee meetings on Equal Franchise and on the

Employment of Married Women. The Union is actively interested in questions of equal opportunity and equal pay, and important resolutions on these matters were passed at the Annual Meeting and forwarded for consideration by the International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress in Rome in May.

*The League of Nations Union.* The Federation is represented on the Women's Advisory Council of the League of Nations Union, and either the Hon. Organizer or the General Secretary has attended its occasional meetings.

*The Council for the Representation of Women on the League of Nations.* The Federation is affiliated to the Council for the Representation of Women on the League of Nations, and a representative attended its Annual Meeting.

*The Six Point Group.* Our representatives were on the platform of the Six Point Group at their protest meeting in November (see page 4), and the Hon. Secretary and the Secretary have addressed their small group meetings on Point 6, "Equality of Pay and Opportunity for Men and Women in the Civil Service."

#### "Opportunity."

The Editor continues to receive appreciative comments as well as caustic criticisms, and hopes that on the whole a fairly satisfactory course is steered between the healthily divergent views of contributors, readers, and owners. Sometimes we brave the Treasurer and blossom into illustrations; sometimes the Civil Service rigorists and trench on politics. Once or twice we have threatened to publish without some important items, as a lesson to unpunctual contributors. Occasionally we make regrettable mistakes. But we believe that on the whole the paper maintains its popularity among Civil Service readers, and we are assured by our advertisers that from their point of view it is a valuable organ. Our own view is that its value is not negligible even among Heads of Departments, but this is largely conjectural.

### NOTE BY THE HON. TREASURER.

From a financial point of view the past year has been a most satisfactory one. In spite of the growing expenditure due to the ever-increasing activities of the Federation and the necessary attendance of its delegates and officers at the consequent committees and councils, the balance of income over expenditure is considerable.

It is satisfactory to report that there is no deficit on *Opportunity* this year. Its circulation has increased, and the quite appreciable amount obtained from the advertisements is proof of the paper's usefulness in this direction.

The Federation Stall at the Green and Gold Fair again produced a very substantial addition to funds, and there was a nice little profit on the very popular calendar.

The keenness of the competitions for the Federation Shield and Cup has more than justified the outlay. There will be an increase in the rent of the Federation Offices during the coming year, and the decision to hold Councils every month will very materially increase both delegate and office expenses.

The balance sheet shows that there is every reason for the Federation to congratulate itself on its financial position, and that the funds which will be necessary to meet the undoubted difficulties of the next two years will not be lacking.

In conclusion the Treasurer begs to thank the respective Treasurers of the constituent Associations for their kind assistance during the past year.

## Federation of Women Civil Servants

*President and Chairman:* MISS J. W. FISK.

*Hon. Treasurer:* MISS M. SYMONDS.

*Hon. Secretary:* MISS D. SMYTH.

*Hon. Organizing Secretary:* MISS F. E. JAMES.

*General Secretary:* MRS. E. M. WHITE.

### Constituent Associations

AS ON 31ST MAY, 1923.

1. Association of Post Office Women Clerks. Secretary, Miss N. K. ARGYLE, 16, Endsleigh Gardens, N.W.1.
2. Association of Women Clerks and Junior Staff Officers in the Ministry of Labour. Secretary, Miss E. C. M. HARDIN, Finance Department, Ministry of Labour, Kew.
3. Association of Women Clerks in the Ministry of Health. Secretary, Miss V. E. BURGE, 116, Elgin Avenue, W.9.
4. Association of Women Clerks in the Board of Education. Secretary, Miss A. S. HEATH, 88, Palace Gates Road, Alexandra Park, N.22.
5. Association of Women Clerks in the Public Trustee Office. Secretary, Miss O. W. BROOKER, 155, Crofton Park Road, Brockley, S.E.4.
6. Association of Women Clerks of Scottish Board of Health. Secretary, Miss A. D. WATSON, Scottish Board of Health, Grassmarket, Edinburgh.
7. Association of Higher Women Officers. Joint Secretaries, Miss E. T. HYSLOP, Ministry of Pensions; Mrs. ROBERTS, Ministry of Health, Bromyard Avenue, Acton, W.3.
8. Association of Foreign Office Women Clerks. Secretary, Miss E. M. GORMAN, Foreign Office, Whitehall, S.W.1.
9. Association of Writing Assistants. Secretary, Miss H. DURBAN, G.A.S., G.P.O., King Edward Building, E.C.1.
10. Association of Crown Agents' Women Clerks and Typists. Joint Secretaries, Misses BRIGHT and CHATTERTON, 4, Millbank, S.W.1.
11. Association of Women Clerical Officers in the Ministry of Pensions. Secretary, Miss G. K. BENNETT, 37, Woodstock Road, Bedford Park, W.4.

### Individual Group.

1. Individual Women Civil Servants for whom no Departmental or Sectional organization of women exists;
2. Individual members of those Departmental or Sectional organizations which are not within the Federation.

