

Annie Villiers

396.11(06)

**NATIONAL UNION OF
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
SOCIETIES**=====

HITCHIN,=====
**STEVENAGE and
District SOCIETY**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
1912-1913.**

J. H. Lawrence, Printer, Welwyn.

N. U. W. S. S.

HITCHIN, STEVENAGE & DISTRICT SOCIETY.

ANNUAL MEETING.

Held on Thursday, March 13th, 1913, in the Old Free School, Hitchin. Rev. P. M. Wathen in the chair.

1.—The Chairman moved the following resolution, which was carried unanimously: "That this meeting of the Hitchin, Stevenage and District Women's Suffrage Society re-iterates the protest against militant methods made by them at their Annual Meeting in March, 1912. The Society remains convinced that the use of violence in political propaganda is wrong in itself and injurious to the cause of Women's Suffrage."

2.—The Reports and Balance Sheet having been read, Miss Daintree moved and Miss Millard seconded that they be adopted, printed and circulated. This was carried.

3.—Mrs. Carling moved and Mrs. Clarke seconded the following resolution: "That in order to facilitate the working of the Society the Committee be empowered to form a local Committee in Stevenage, as soon as it is practicable to do so." This was carried.

4.—The President and Vice-Presidents were appointed and the Hon. Officers and Executive Committee were elected for the ensuing year.

5.—The Chairman moved and Mrs. Smithson seconded a hearty vote of thanks to Miss Villiers for her indefatigable zeal as Secretary for the last four years and for her devoted services to the cause of Women's Suffrage. Carried with acclamation.

At the close of the meeting, Mrs. Stevenson, of Cambridge, gave an interesting address, which was much appreciated.

PRESIDENT:

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF LYTTON.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

THE LADY ROBERT CECIL.

MRS. T. T. GREG, MRS. HERBERT JONES,
Buntingford. Hitchin.

THE DOWAGER COUNTESS OF LYTTON, C.I.

MRS. BERNARD SHAW, MISS TUKE,
Ayot St. Lawrence. Bedford College, London.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Hon. Sec.: MISS A. VILLIERS, 11, Julians Road, Stevenage.

Hon. Treasurer: MRS. WATHEN, The Rectory, Welwyn.

MRS. F. CARLING.	MRS. REED.
MRS. GIBLIN.	MR. E. W. SMITHSON.
REV. J. D. JONES, (Knebworth).	MRS. E. W. SMITHSON.
MISS KING.	MISS VILLIERS.
	REV. P. M. WATHEN.

THE OBJECT OF THE SOCIETY

Is to obtain the Parliamentary Franchise for Women on the same conditions as it is or may be granted to Men. The Society seeks to achieve this object by holding meetings in the towns and villages of the district, and by acting as a centre for the collection and diffusion of information with regard to the progress of the movement in all parts of the country.

Methods—Constitutional, Educational, and Non-Party.

RULES.

- 1.—The title of the Society shall be the Hitchin, Stevenage and District Society.
- 2.—Approval of the objects and methods of the Society, and an annual subscription of not less than one shilling shall constitute membership.
- 3.—Those in sympathy with the objects of the Society may become Associates on paying one penny annually for the Report.
- 4.—The affairs of the Society shall be managed by the Executive Committee and the Honorary Officers, five to form a quorum, with power to fill up casual vacancies during the year.
- 5.—The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held within a month of the close of the financial year, to receive the report and statement of accounts; to appoint the Executive Committee and Officers and to transact business for which urgency is voted. Nominations for the Executive and proposed alteration of Rules shall be sent to the Hon. Secretary at least one fortnight before the date of the Annual Meeting. Members only shall have the right of voting. Subscriptions to become payable on March 1st.
- 6.—A Special General Meeting of the Society may be called at any time by the Committee, or at the written request of five members of the Society by the Honorary Secretary, subject to eight days' notice to members. At such meeting no other business than that stated on the notice shall be discussed.

Report, 1912-13.

INTRODUCTORY.

In issuing our Report for the past year, it seems desirable to give a brief review of the general situation which has changed considerably during the last twelve months. Early in March of last year, we had good reason to expect that women would shortly be placed on the Parliamentary Register, and accordingly urged our members to renewed effort. Such effort was certainly not lacking, but the victory still remains to be won, and it is necessary to make further appeal for steady and energetic work.

On March 28th, 1912, the Conciliation Bill was rejected by the House of Commons by a majority of 14 votes. More than one cause contributed to this adverse majority. At first there was a strong disposition to throw the entire blame on the shoulders of the Militant Suffragists, whose attacks on property had incensed the public, and undoubtedly alienated some of our weaker supporters in the House of Commons and outside, beside furnishing others with a plausible excuse for defection. It soon, however, became abundantly clear to every impartial observer, that the main cause for this defeat lay in the fact that certain supporters of the Government, and more particularly the Irish Party in the House, had become convinced that if any measure of Women's Suffrage were carried it would weaken the Government, humiliate the Prime Minister and endanger the passage of Home Rule. The whole force of the Irish vote (with the exception of a few independents) was therefore cast against it, with the result stated above.

In May, the National Union held a special Council Meeting, to consider their policy in these altered conditions, for it was only to be expected that the forces which had operated in defeating the Conciliation Bill, would be brought to bear on the amendments to the Franchise Bill when these came up in the autumn. At that Council it was decided by a large majority that in view of the previous record of the Labour Party on our question, and taking into account that this is the only party which has ever made Women's Suffrage a plank in its platform, the National Union should henceforth support the Labour Candidate in 3-cornered elections, always provided that the Candidate was personally satisfactory on the Women's Suffrage question. A special fund, to be called the Election Fighting Fund was raised for carrying out this work. The object of this development in our policy was to convince the Government that it would be more dangerous to them to oppose Women's Suffrage than to support it. Although this policy only affects a limited number of constituencies, it was clearly seen at the time of its adoption that it would not be pleasing to

some of our members. In order to minimize any possible falling off in membership which might thus accrue, the Council adopted at the same time the scheme known as the "Friends of Women's Suffrage." This is a scheme for enrolling and registering all those supporters who for any reason feel unable to join a Society. It is particularly useful among the working classes, though by no means confined to them. The "Friends" pay nothing and have no right of voting, but they attend meetings, are visited and given literature, and becoming informed themselves, they in turn inform others. Your Society has adopted this scheme, and has about 80 "friends" at the present time.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE FRANCHISE BILL.

The history of the withdrawal of the Franchise Bill is too recent to need recapitulation. Suffice it to say that our Society contributed liberally both in money and time to further the amendments to this measure.

Devotion and self-sacrifice may seem to have borne little fruit, but this satisfaction is at least to be drawn from our temporary defeat, that Women's Suffrage has become a dominant issue in politics, as was clearly shown by the contents of the newspapers during the week before the withdrawal of the Franchise Bill. And in face of the Resolution carried a few days after at the Labour Party's Conference, whereby its representatives in Parliament are instructed to "oppose any Franchise Bill in which Women are not included," it is highly improbable that such a Bill would pass the House of Commons in future.

EASTERN COUNTIES FEDERATION.

It will be remembered that our Society is one of 32 Societies comprised in the Eastern Counties Federation, which exists to form new Societies, and to perfect existing organisation within its own area, and also to help forward generally the cause of Women's Suffrage in that part of the country for which it is responsible. This Federation is doing excellent work under great difficulties, and deserves all possible support. In spite of great efforts, there still remain six constituencies within its borders which have no Suffrage Society, while in others the Societies are small. Your committee agreed therefore that it was even more important to help the Federation in forming new Societies and strengthening weak places, than to continue to hold a succession of meetings in our own constituency, though our villages are still for the most part untouched.

Our organising Secretary has therefore given some of her time to work in other parts of the Federation area, and has been successful in forming three entirely new Societies—those of Thetford, Great Yarmouth and St. Albans—beside lending

a hand now and again when help was needed in places where the organisation was weak. This fact accounts for our own list of meetings appearing rather less important than usual, but it does not imply any falling off in zeal, as in addition to sparing their Organising Secretary, your Society has borne the entire expense of forming the St. Albans Society, providing the speakers from its own members, and has helped liberally in other ways. Your committee are particularly grateful to those members and electors who have written to Lord Robert Cecil from time to time, urging him to support any measure for Women's Suffrage which happened to be before the House.

GROWTH OF THE SOCIETY.

It is satisfactory to be able to record that notwithstanding the work carried on in other places, our own membership has increased, though we have lost members, chiefly by removal. Our membership now is 162, which means a gain of 26 members during the year. This is exclusive of associate members and "friends," who together number about 100. Knebworth is responsible for the greatest increase in members, Stevenage for the largest number of "friends," by far the larger number of whom have been enrolled by working women themselves. Many more members are required however, in all classes, particularly among women of leisure, who will give up something in order to help the work, which is at present being done by a few only. Should any of these happen to be incapacitated or removed, the work would inevitably suffer and besides, new members bring life and freshness into a movement. We confidently appeal to all members to do their utmost to secure fresh supporters in the coming year.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Your committee have met twelve times during the year. It is with sincere regret that we have to announce that for private reasons Mrs. Mare and Mrs. Snook feel unable to offer themselves for re-election. Also that Miss Villiers for similar reasons is not standing for the office of Hon. Secretary.

DELEGATES.

Representatives of our Society have attended the quarterly Committee Meetings of the Eastern Counties Federation, also the Special Council Meeting of the National Union, held last May, and the Annual Council Meeting held in February of this year. A message to Mrs. Fawcett, assuring her of our steadfastness was sent from our Society and presented to her on the occasion of the Demonstration held in her honour at the Grafton Galleries on Feb. 27th, 1913.

At the great meeting held in the Albert Hall, on November 5th, our Society occupied a box, and those members who were

present listened with pride and satisfaction to the splendid speech of our Member, Lord Robert Cecil, who was one of the principal speakers.

Delegates were also present at the meeting held in the London Opera House, on Dec. 4th, which was organised by the Joint Campaign Committee.

"COMMON CAUSE" AND LITERATURE.

It is to be feared that our members do not make as much use of our literature, and more particularly of the N. U. Organ, the "Common Cause" as we should like. More supporters are needed for this weekly paper if it is to pay its way. A poster has been displayed at Hitchin Station during the past year, but this needs supplementing by personal effort. Our thanks are due and are heartily given to our local press, who invariably report our meetings well, beside granting us the hospitality of their columns for correspondence, when need arises for enlightening the public as to our policy, etc.

CONCLUSION.

Your Committee feel that they cannot close this Report without expressing their heartfelt appreciation of the work done for our Cause by our Member, Lord Robert Cecil (both inside and outside the House of Commons), and of our President, Lord Lytton, during the strenuous year that has just closed. The support of these high-minded men, and of others like them, goes far to nullify the bungling and insincerity of party politicians, and gives us good hope of the future.

List of Meetings, 1912-13.

- Feb. 12th.—Stevenage, "The Chestnuts." Speaker: Mrs. Wathen.
- Feb. 26th.—Ditto ditto. Speaker: Miss S. A. Villiers.
- Mar. 11th.—Ditto ditto. Speaker: Miss A. Villiers.
- Mar. 25th.—Ditto ditto. Speaker: Rev. J. D. Jones.
- May 6th.—Knebworth. Speaker: Miss A. Villiers. Chair: Miss Plowden.
- June 20th.—Knebworth House. Speaker: Mr. Laurence Housman. Chair: Lord Lytton.
- July 5th.—Cake and Candy Sale. Hitchin.
- July 8th.—Ditto ditto. Welwyn.
- Sept. 30th.—Stevenage, "The Chestnuts," Speaker: Miss A. Villiers.
- Oct. 5th.—Stevenage. Rummage Sale.
- Oct. 18th.—Hitchin. Speaker: Mrs. Nott Bower. Chair: Mrs. Herbert Jones.

Oct. 21st.—Stevenage, "The Chestnuts," Social Evening. Speaker: Mrs. Reed.

Oct. 28th.—Knebworth, Mrs. Muirhead's Drawing-room Meeting. Speaker: Miss Hessel. Chair: Miss Plowden.

Nov. 13th.—Welwyn Rectory. Speaker: Miss A. Villiers.

Nov. 18th.—Knebworth. Speaker: Miss Bertha Mason. Chair: Lord Lytton.

Nov. 22nd.—Stevenage. Speaker: Mrs. Cooper. Chair: Rev. P. M. Wathen.

Nov. 22nd.—Hitchin. Speaker: Mrs. Cooper. Chair: Mrs. Smithson.

Dec. 5th.—Hitchin. Speaker: Mrs. Bonwick. Chair: Mrs. Frederick Taylor.

1913, Feb. 24th.—Welwyn Rectory. Speaker: Mrs. Rackham. Chair: Rev. P. M. Wathen.

Feb. 24th.—Stevenage. Social Evening. Speaker: Mrs. Rackham. Chair: Miss A. Villiers.

RESOLUTION PASSED.

In January the Hitchin, Stevenage and District Trades Council passed a resolution urging Lord Robert Cecil to vote for Mr. Henderson's Amendment to the Government Franchise Bill to confer the vote on all adult men and women.

BALANCE SHEET, MARCH 1912 TO MARCH 1913.

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Balance in hand	4	4 10	Affiliation Fees N.U.W.S.S.	2	0 9
Subscriptions	19	4 7	Donations to Eastern Counties Federation...	10	0 0
Donations	11	12 0	Donation to Election Fighting Fund	10	0 0
Collections at Meetings...	9	7 1	Stationery, Printing and Advertising	11	0 1
Cake Sale.....	8	0 7½	Expenses Meetings.....	15	6 11½
Rummage Sale	10	0 0	Literature	2	7 7½
Payments for Brake	7	3	Organisers' & Delegates' Expenses	1	15 3
Sale Literature	3	11½	Expenses Cake Sale	1	7 9
			Postage	2	16 7
			Cheque Book	5	0
			Contribution to Gift—Mrs. Fawcett.....	5	0
				57	5 0
			Balance in hand.....	5	15 4
	£63	0 4		£63	0 4

EDITH I. WATHEN,
Hon. Treasurer.

Examined and found correct,
JOHN H. DEARDS.

March 7th, 1913.

Treasurer's Report.

Happy is the Treasurer who has no history! Last year, owing to the unexpected bye-election, we had to chronicle exceptional efforts and exceptional expenses. The result of that election having been the return of a Member thoroughly satisfactory from the Women's Suffrage point of view, we have this year been able to give a good deal of help, financial and otherwise, outside our own constituency. In several instances we have paid the expenses of our Organising Secretary, incurred in her work for the Eastern Counties' Federation, expenses which otherwise would have fallen on that Federation, and during the year we have contributed £10 directly to the funds of the Federation. We have also helped the Election Fighting Fund of the National Union by a donation of £10.

Stationery, Printing and Advertising is a fairly heavy item in our expenditure, but in every way it is money well spent, especially as regards advertising. The country ought to know and realise what the Suffrage Societies are doing, and advertisements of meetings in the local papers are an excellent means of making this knowledge widespread.

Expenses of Meetings are not quite so heavy as usual this year. At the time of the election in 1911 we found it necessary to secure large halls lest our meetings should be spoilt by party political meetings being held on the same night. This year we have, as a rule, hired smaller halls, and meetings have also been held at private houses.

It will be noted that we have bought a good deal of literature and sold very little. The explanation is that we give away a great deal at our meetings and privately, and find it a most useful means of propaganda.

In February, 1913, we were asked as a Society to subscribe a small sum towards a badge to be presented to Mrs. Fawcett on the occasion of the Council Meeting on Feb. 27th. We gladly did so, and some of us who were there when the gift from the National Union was presented to our leader, can testify to its beauty and suitability, and to the warmth of feeling of which it was the symbol.

With regard to our receipts, we have two new Vice-Presidents who have been very kind to us. Our list of donations is smaller than usual, but there has been no special occasion to call them forth.

In July a Cake and Candy Sale was organised by Mrs. Smithson, with the help of the Committee, at Hitchin, and a small supplementary Sale was held at "Hillside," Welwyn, a few days later.

In October the Misses Villiers arranged a very successful Rummage Sale at Stevenage.

We must again thank Mr. J. H. Deards for his services as Auditor of the accounts, and Miss Villiers for her great goodness in undertaking the whole of the Treasurer's work during the autumn months.

The greater number of our members cannot of course give personal service to the cause; we should like to appeal to them to do one practical thing—to pay their subscriptions early in the year and without waiting to be asked for them!

MEMBERS' NAMES & SUBSCRIPTIONS.

NOTE.—The subscriptions of Members who have joined the Society lately are not entered in this Report. These subscriptions are counted in the receipts for the year 1913-14 and will be entered in next year's Report.

An asterisk is placed against the names of Members whose subscriptions were erroneously entered in last year's Report.

HITCHIN.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
Abbott, Miss (2 years)	5 0	Mackinlay, Mrs.	2 6
Billingham, Miss	1 0	*McKay, Miss	1 0
Brown, Miss Johnson	1 0	Millard, Miss E.	1 0
*Bryan, Mrs.	1 0	Nicholson, Miss	2 0
Catford, Mrs.....	1 0	Payne, Mrs.	
Cecil, The Lady Robert	1 1 0	Payne, Miss	
Clarke, Mrs.	1 0	*Payne, Miss B. J. ...	1 0
Fontaine, Miss	1 0	Pepper, Miss.....	1 0
Gatward, Miss	2 0	Price, Miss L.	1 0
Giblin, Mrs.	3 0	Seebom, Mrs.....	2 6
Gosnell, Miss (2 years)	4 0	Sewell, Mrs.	1 0
Hatch, Mr. H. F. (2 years)	2 0	Seymour, Miss	1 0
Hatch, Mrs. H. F. (2 years)	2 0	Smithson, Mr. E. W.	10 0
Hughes, Mr. H. R....		Smithson, Mrs. E. W.	1 0 0
Jones, Mrs.	5 0	Swaine, Mrs.....	2 6
King, Miss.....	2 6	Swaine, Miss A.	1 0
Kingsley, Miss (A).....	6	Taylor, Mrs. Frederick	2 6
*Lindsell, Mrs.....	2 6	Tuke, Miss	
*Lintin, Miss L.	1 0	Webb, Miss	5 0
Lucas, Miss M. (2 years)	2 0	Webb, Miss G.....	5 0
		*Woods, Miss	1 0

KNEBWORTH.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
Adamson, Mrs. (the late)	1 0	Muirhead, Miss	2 6
Avery, Miss	1 0	Muirhead, Miss E. ...	2 6
Balfour, The Lady Betty	5 0	Parker, Mrs.	1 0
Bradley, Mrs. (A).....	6	Plowden, Miss	10 0
Bromhead, Mrs.	1 0	Quarm, Mrs.....	1 0
Buchanan, Mrs.....	5 0	Reed, Mr. C. C.	5 0
Collins, Miss.....		Reed, Mrs. C. C.....	5 0
Creasey, Mrs.....		Renwick, Miss	1 0
Jones, Rev. J. D. (2 years)	4 6	Seaton, Mrs.....	1 0
Lytton, The Dowager Countess of	10 0	Staines, Mrs. Howard	1 0
Marshall, Mrs.	5 0	Wallace, Mrs.	2 6
Muirhead, Mrs.....	2 6	Willis, Mr.....	3 0
		Wilson, Mrs.....	1 0

STEVENAGE.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
Abbott, Miss	1 0	Mare, Mr. J.....	1 0
Abbott, Miss A		Mare, Mrs. J.....	2 0
Apted, Mrs.	2 0	Marr, Miss.....	1 0
Arnold, Miss L. R. (A)	3	Milnes, Mr.....	1 0
Ashe, Miss.....	1 0	Milnes, Mrs.....	1 0
Ashwood, Miss (A) ...	3	Morton, Mrs. (A)	3
Austin, Mr. H. H.....	2 0	Morton, Miss E. (A)...	3
Austin, Mrs. H. H....	2 0	Mullis, Mrs.	5 0
Beaver, Miss.....	1 0	Oldham, Miss A. M... 1	1 0
Bell, Mrs.	2 6	Piggott, Miss (A)	3
Bertram, Mrs.	5 0	Roden, Miss	1 0
Blight, Miss	1 0	Scott, Miss	
Breuer, Mr. K.....	1 0	Scrivener, Mrs.....	1 0
Carling, Mrs. F.	5 0	Shelford, Mrs. G. (A)	1
Carling, Miss G.	1 0	Smith, Mrs. E.....	1 0
Clarke, Miss	1 0	Snook, Mr. G.	2 6
Cole, Mrs. A. (A).....	2	Snook, Mrs. G.	2 6
Collinson, Mrs.		Snow, Mr. (A)	3
Collinson, Miss.....		Snow, Mrs. (A).....	3
Court, Miss L. (A) ...	3	Spicer, Miss L. (A) ...	3
Craft, Mrs.	1 0	Staines, Mrs.....	1 0
Drayson, Mrs.	1 0	Staines, Miss.....	1 0
Dunn, Mrs. Bickham	2 0	Venables, Mrs. (A) ...	3
Dyson, Mrs.	2 0	Villiers, Miss.....	10 6
Gare, Mr. G. C.	1 0	Villiers, Miss A.....	10 6
Gare, Mrs. G. C.....	1 0	Villiers, Miss S. A. ...	2 6
Gough, Mrs.	1 0	*Wells, Mr. F. B. ...	1 0
Ireton, Mrs. (A)	2	*Wells, Mrs. F. B. ...	1 0
Johnson, Mr. G. W... 2	6	*Wells, Miss S. (A) ...	6
Jowitt, Miss L.....	3 0	*Wells, Miss A. (A)...	6
Kennish, Mrs.	1 0	Wurr, Miss	1 0
Lee, Miss	1 0		

WELWYN.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
Adams, Mr. J. (A) ...	1	Hitchcock, Mrs.	2 6
Adams, Mrs. J.....	1 0	Hodges, Mrs.....	1 3
Ansell, Mr.	1 3	Holden, Mr.	1 0
Ansell, Mrs.	1 3	Holden, Mrs.	1 0
Ashby, Miss	1 0	Hulse, Mr.	1 3
Bell, Miss	1 0	Hulse, Mrs.	1 3
Blow, Mrs. Harry ...	1 0	Kendall, Mrs.....	1 3
Colyer, Mr.	1 0	Lane-Claypon, Rev. E. W.	1 0
Coulson, Mr. H.		Lawrence, Mrs.	1 0
Cross, Miss G.	1 0	Lawrence, Mrs. J. H.	1 0
Deards, Mr. J. H.....	5 0	Lubbock, Mrs. Edgar	2 0
Dixon, Miss	1 0	Moss, Mr. C.	1 0
Dodd, Mrs.	1 0	Muirhead, Miss	1 0
Downing, Mr.	1 0	Owen, Mr. G. C.....	10 0
Dyer, Miss E.	1 3	Pam, Miss	5 0
Fairhurst, Miss.....	1 3	Parr, Mrs. Cecil	5 0
Filmore, Mr. S.	2 0	Potts, Miss	2 0
Filmore, Mrs. S.	2 0	Poulton, Mr. T.....	3 6
Hassard, Mr. (A)	1	Powell, Miss.....	1 0
Hassard, Mrs.	1 0	Powell, Mrs. Owen ...	
Henderson, Mrs.	1 0	Sailly, Miss	1 0
Hitchcock, Mr.....	2 6	Shaw, Mrs. Bernard	1 0 0

WELWYN—(Continued).

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Smith, Miss I.	1	0		Vickers, Rev. Randall	1	0	
Snow, Miss	1	0		Vickers, Mrs. Randall	2	6	
Staveley, Mrs.	1	0		Waller, Mrs.	1	0	
Stocks, Mr. (A).....	1		1	Wathen, Rev. P. M...	2	6	
Stocks, Mrs.	1	0		Wathen, Mrs.	5	0	
Twine, Miss	1	0					

DONATIONS.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Anonymous	1	6		Mullis, Mrs.	5	0	
„	5	0	0	Oldham, Miss	5	0	
„	1	0		Smithson, Mrs.....	3	2	6
„	2	7	0	Villiers, Miss A.	5	0	
„ per Villiers, Miss S.	5	0					

