

THE VOTE,
JULY 5, 1918.
ONE PENNY.

WHAT IS LUXURY?

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1918

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.

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TRY ANOTHER BILL!

The "Little C. D. Bill."

The Infant Hercules for whom the Government Longs.

Small Bills are in the fashion. The elaborate Ministry of Health Bill is apparently to be replaced by the "Little Baby Bill," and now we have again the bright idea of substituting for the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, so troublesome to its supporters, another little Bill to gain the same end.

The first public announcement of the possibility of this event was made in the House of Lords on May 7. (See THE VOTE, page 253.) During the second reading debate of the Government's Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1918, Lord Sydenham threw out a more or less spontaneous suggestion that "to save time" Clause V., which "embodied a most important new principle because it made the communication of venereal disease an indictable offence," should be made into a separate Bill and rushed through Parliament as quickly as possible, replacing 40D. The Archbishop of Canterbury followed, and gave a qualified blessing to the idea.

Nothing much has been heard publicly of this little Bill since, though its advocates have not been idle, till on June 17 at Caxton Hall, at the third annual meeting of the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases, Mr. Hayes Fisher, President of the Local Government Board, after admitting that there was *little hope of legislation this session*, or even perhaps during the war Parliament, went on to think that Clause V. might well be formed into a

one-clause measure, which would have good hope of passage, and do away with 40D. We are delighted to observe that the Government and all concerned are supremely and increasingly uncomfortable under 40D, and eager to placate the opposition by any concessions provided they are worthless.

The Reason for 40D.

Mr. Macpherson, on June 19, in the House of Commons debate, gave an artless account of what had happened at last year's Imperial Conference. The statesmen of the Dominions, he said, declared that they would not in future be responsible for the conduct of their troops unless the Government "did something" to prevent the spread of venereal disease in this country. The Home Office "did something," and brought in its Criminal Law Amendment Bill. After a stormy passage through some of its stages, discretion proved the better part of valour, and the Home Office hung up the Bill. This session, with another Imperial Conference in prospect and "nothing done" and the Home Office declining to bring the Bill again forward, "something" obviously had to be done. The War Office rushed in where the more experienced Home Office feared to tread, 40D was introduced under the Defence of the Realm Act, and, by Order in Council, at the bidding of statesmen of our Dominions, a new crime was invented for British women, and their reputations

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and liberty were put at the mercy of inexperienced policemen or unscrupulous persons or of any man in the Army or the Navy. No doubt the Government was prepared for protest; it has not been disappointed; but the great storm of opposition that is in progress exceeds expectation.

We are now being offered a Clause V-by-Itself Bill in place of 40D. We reject the offer. We do not intend to keep 40D, but we will not exchange it for a worse iniquity. As Lord Willoughby de Broke said, in the House of Lords, of our Central Hall meeting of April 29, we are "dead against any legislation about prostitution or venereal disease in any shape, form or description, especially with medical examination, as being bound to revive the old C.D. Act.

40D punishes immorality with or solicitation of a soldier or sailor by an infectious woman. Clause V. punishes immorality with, or solicitation of any person by any other person (man or woman) in an infectious condition.

Our opponents like to assume that our sole objection to 40D is its unequal treatment of women and men, and they take it for granted that Clause V., which places the sexes in a position of "absolute equality before the law," is what we ought to want to have.

Clause V. has all the evils of 40D and others peculiar to itself; it would be permanent, whereas D.O.R.A. is nominally for the period of the war only; it would be universal in its application and the circle of its victims wider. The possibility that occasionally those victims might include a stray man is no recommendation to us, and we know that, in practice, almost invariably, women alone would be charged. Both measures bestow the same "right" of remand for medical examination, forcing upon the prisoner a shameful outrage to establish innocence, and both measures share with the old C.D. Acts the discredited and mischievous fallacy that the removal of a few centres of infection will diminish the volume of venereal disease. E. KNIGHT.

40D IN THE HOUSE.

Have Women any Rights?

MR. LEES-SMITH (June 24) asked the Home Secretary whether women at Eastbourne and Newport Pagnell, charged under 40D, had their names and addresses published whilst the name of the soldier was withheld, and would he direct that the names of both man and woman should be both public or both private.

MR. BRACE was informed that in both cases the soldiers went into the witness-box and gave their names. He could neither compel nor prevent publication of the names of defendants and witnesses.

MR. LEES-SMITH asked that women charged under 40D should in all cases be informed that there is no power to compel them to submit to a medical examination against their will.

MR. BRACE had no authority to give such instructions to magistrates, and had no knowledge of the need for such a circular.

MR. LEES-SMITH called for instructions to the chief constables. In all these cases the women only submitted because they thought it compulsory, and all over the country 40D was being worked simply by trading on the ignorance of these women.

MR. BRACE denied any need to instruct chief constables, who knew their position under the law.

MR. LEES-SMITH: Had chief constables instructions to tell the women of THEIR rights under the law?

MR. BRACE: There was no reason for a special circular, but he "would again look into the matter."

The War Office Conference on Venereal Diseases.

MR. LEES-SMITH (June 25) asked for the names of the members.

MR. MACPHERSON stated that the Conference included the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Bourne, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, Lord Sydenham, representatives of the French Army, the American Army and Navy, the Dominions and the British Army and Navy.

MR. LEES-SMITH said there were no representatives of the women's organisations that had been making special inquiries into this subject of 40D, and would he see that representatives of the women were added to the Conference.

MR. MACPHERSON thought the Conference thoroughly representative of all views. Lord Sydenham was on it; he knew the whole question thoroughly.

MR. LEES-SMITH said the women's organisations had collected valuable recent information. Had they not a right to be represented on the Conference?

MR. MACPHERSON said nobody had any right, because it was his own Conference which he summoned to help him and the Army to combat this very dangerous disease, and it ought to be left to him and to the War Office to choose what representatives they wanted. He chose Lord Sydenham because he knew the whole question better than anyone else.

The Combined Deputation Again

MR. LEES-SMITH (June 26) asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether the War Office had refused to receive a combined deputation of fifty-six social, religious, political and industrial organisations representing upwards of 1,000,000 members, and why it refused.

MR. MACPHERSON admitted the refusal. The reasons were stated on April 16. (*That our views were known, and were not held by the War Office.*)

MR. LEES-SMITH: Did not that refer to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill? These bodies had information collected in the last few months. Would he consider the fact that they were not represented on the Conference at the War Office, and that 40D penalises women only, and ask the Secretary of State for War to reconsider this matter.

MR. MACPHERSON did not think that possible.

OUR OPEN COLUMN.

*** Letters intended for publication must be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated by the name and address of the writer. It must be clearly understood that we do not necessarily identify ourselves with the opinions expressed.

DEAR MADAM,—If we do not understand Regulation of 40D we ought to, for THE VOTE has been dealing with the subject very fully. But the question—the whole question—needs thoughtful study. I have never been able to understand the difference between *indecent assault* and *criminal assault*. Could Dr. Knight, who seems to be such an expert in the matter, explain this? State regulation of vice is, from every point of view, bad. It is much the same thing as *authorising vice*. Josephine Butler says: "Among the clauses in Magna Charta, there is one upon which the importance of all the others hinges, and upon which the security afforded by the others practically depends." Then she quotes the clause in the supplementary clause:—

39. No free man shall be taken, or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or banished, or any ways destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, nor will we send upon him, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.

40. We will sell to no man, we will not deny to any man, either justice or right.

Blackstone and other writers interpret the word "destroy" as forbidding any proceeding upon the body of an accused person unless after trial by jury.

Let our present-day lawyers ponder over this.—
Yours very truly,
BEATRICE KENT.

WOMEN IN WAR TIME.

Women Candidates for Parliament.

In reply to a question put by Mr. Cowan, in the House of Commons, on June 25, as to whether the Prime Minister would take steps, by legislation or otherwise, to ensure that duly qualified women electors may be nominated as Parliamentary candidates, Mr. Bonar Law said he had "nothing to add to the previous replies on this subject."

Why this continued delay on such an important matter? Cannot our highly paid Crown lawyers come to a decision on the matter? If that is the case why do they not say so, and confess that it is time women were admitted to their profession to help them to dispel its oppressive fogginess.

Women in the Legal Profession.

Lord Haldane's Bill, opening the legal profession in Scotland to women, has passed all its stages in the House of Lords, and, with Lord Buckmaster's Bill to enable women to become solicitors, it is waiting for the facilities in the House of Commons which were promised it by the Government. The session is drawing to a close, and women would be rightly aggrieved if they were once more put off with the "No time" excuse of the maidservant.

Denmark's Women Legislators.

One of the four women who have been elected to the Danish Parliament in the first election held since their enfranchisement is Mrs. Munch, says the *Manchester Guardian*. She was selected by the Radical party, and is the wife of the Danish Minister of War, president of the Danish Suffrage Society, and a member of the Copenhagen Town Council. Another successful candidate is Mrs. Helsa Larsen, a town councillor, a prominent member of the Social Democrats, but unknown in the women's movement. The successful Conservative candidate was Mrs. Malling Hanschultz, a barrister, and the fourth, Miss Anherstad, had done good work as a town councillor. Several other women had been nominated, most of them prominent as lecturers, writers, politicians, or social workers, but not all feminists. One of these had been placed first on her party's list of Copenhagen candidates, but there was some disappointment at the positions accorded to women by other parties. The women electors took a great share in the elections, 75 per cent. of them voting.

The Consoling Vote.

A Bill is to be introduced into the French Chamber enabling women to vote in Parliamentary and Municipal elections. The vote is apparently to be tucked into the hem of the long black veil worn by French mourners, and to be regarded as a token of national sympathy. In the preamble of the Bill it is stated that "War widows and mothers of soldiers killed and all other Frenchwomen who have suffered from the war have acquired the right to vote." Senator Marten's intentions are no doubt excellent, though his Bill does not show evidence of that clear logical faculty by which the French are characterised. The rights of citizenship carry with them duties, and need alertness and enterprise. It seems scarcely advisable to specially call up those who are bowed with grief and lay upon them alone the duties which should be shared by all adult women.

A Disappointment from America.

The requisite two-thirds majority in the Senate of the United States was unfortunately not obtained for the Woman Suffrage amendment to the Federal Constitution. Woman Suffrage in the States is apparently still to come, like the rations—not too much at a time.

A Reminder.

At the Labour Conference last Friday Miss Mary MacArthur drew attention to the dismissal of 40,000 women munition workers at short notice just before the March offensive.

"Although the Ministry of Munitions had been aware for six weeks that these dismissals were going to take place, they had never informed the Ministry of Labour, and in some places over 1,000 women were dismissed without the local labour exchanges knowing anything about it, so that no provision was made.

Such action as that, she said, makes us rather cynical about the praises showered on women workers. They are good enough to be praised when their work is wanted, but they are only good enough to be turned on to the scrap heap afterwards. She asked what had become of the Government pledges of 1915 on the subject of equal pay for equal work. Women had not shared in the war advances granted to men workers. It might be allowed that women were receiving double the sweated wages of before the war, and that men had dependents. But admitting that, the fact remained that if men were going to allow women to undercut them and women to allow themselves to be exploited to cheapen production, there would be a disastrous state of things in industry. The vote was conceded to women on the ground of their services in the war, yet the Representation of the People Act excluded the vast majority of women war-workers."—*Manchester Guardian*, June 28, 1918.

Exceptionally Hard Work.

From Mr. Clynes's reply to a question of Sir J. Yoxall in the House of Commons, we gather that, though there is to be "no change in the principle of supplementary rations," a considerable number of women on exceptionally hard work "have been admitted to supplementary rations, and the list may be extended in suitable cases."

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

Captain Arthur St. John (hon. secretary of the Penal Reform League), speaking last Wednesday in the Minerva Café on "Women's Responsibility for Prisons and Prisoners," advocated strongly the need for women on Prison Commissions, or, alternatively, a special committee of women to act as directors of women's prisons and the women's portions of H.M. prisons. Further, that the governors of women's prisons should invariably be women, and that the medical officers in charge of women prisoners should be women. Captain St. John emphasised the necessity of having specially selected nursing sisters in all prisons—both for men and women—because it was most advisable that the atmosphere in all prisons should be completely changed. Captain St. John expressed himself in agreement with the Women's Freedom League demand for women magistrates on the Bench, and with women being present in police courts to watch cases in the interests of women. The chair was taken by Miss F. A. Underwood, and a general discussion took place on the desirability of many measures in the direction of penal reform. Many present supported the chairman's suggestion that it might be in the interests of true penal reform if no one could be appointed to the magistrate's bench before he or she had served a month's imprisonment with hard labour, so that the magistrate could know from experience to what conditions he was sentencing a prisoner.

The meeting closed with a cordial vote of thanks to Captain St. John, and the hope was expressed that he would come again to speak for us in the autumn.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, July 5th, 1918.

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THE LUXURY TAX.

On the 22nd of April the House considered the financial statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the ways and means by which our seven and three-quarter millions per day are to be obtained. Mr. Bonar Law proposed a luxury tax, which apparently he had desired to introduce last year. Only after close examination, he was advised that "the difficulties were so great that it was not worth while proceeding with." Since then this tax has actually been imposed in France. The Chamber gave its sanction and left details to be arranged by a Commission, and it came into operation in the beginning of April.

Mr. Bonar Law interviewed the French Minister of Finance early in the year, and has since sent a representative to study French methods on the spot.

This tax is composed of three varieties. First, a tax on articles which are essentially articles of luxury apart from price, such as jewellery. In addition, a tax on a variety of articles which, in the opinion of the French Government, become articles of luxury above a certain price, and should therefore be subject to the tax. There is, in addition, a tax on luxury establishments, hotels and residences.

Mr. Pringle asked innocently if a pocket handkerchief was a luxury, and received the answer that it depended on the price.

In the schedule of the French articles a smoking jacket, a frock coat or a morning coat is not a luxury if it costs £5; above that price it becomes a luxury and is taxed 80 per cent. Scissors and cutlery become luxuries over 10 francs, and chinaware over 2 francs, rather hard for those who break, say, a toilet jug or basin; but that is the difficulty of deciding what is a luxury.

Sir J. D. Rees suggested that the luxury of living in a house with a special name of comfort, such as "Mon Abri," "Mon Repos," "Home," "Le Petit Enfer," should be paid for, and observed that such a tax could be very easily collected. Another effect might be that the distraught householder might efface his poetic fancy and be content with the number assigned him by his local Council.

Sir G. Agnew put in an able defence for modern artists, and pointed out the hardship of placing a tax upon their work, which would have the effect of preventing the public from buying. Artists have been applied to perpetually since the war to paint pictures at a fixed price, the money to go entirely to the Red Cross Society, and many have done this who have had a bad year of sales. It would certainly be hard to penalise their generosity.

On the 14th of May Mr. McKenna pointed out that already the operation of the luxury tax in France

was causing great dissatisfaction. Since then one has heard rumours from those who know that the difficulties are so great it will probably be abandoned. However, on April 30, the House appointed a Committee "to consider and report what articles and places ought respectively to be classed as articles of luxury and places of luxury, for the purpose of the provision of any Act of the present session, which may impose a duty on payments made in respect of the purchase or supply of articles of luxury, or on payments made in respect of goods sold or supplied, accommodation supplied or services rendered at any place of luxury." Twelve members were appointed, and later seven women were co-opted to advise upon the delicate and contentious question of luxury in women's dress and articles of toilet.

From this Committee Mr. Tyson Wilson, the only Labour member, has already resigned, also Mrs. Vaughan Nash, Miss Violet Markham and Miss M. Craig. Mr. Tyson Wilson apparently remains technically a member of Committee, as he can only get his discharge from the House of Commons. A bewildered Sub-Committee has dropped the job in despair and sent in a blank form to the main Committee.

Most of the nation are willing to be taxed, to give up luxuries, or even necessities, to be clothed with wood or the skins of beasts (spite of tax) if only we could bring this hideous war and the slaughter and agonies of our sons and husbands to an end. At the same time, we have a right to ask that there should be wise and judicious use made of the taxation which is bleeding us white.

The Ministry of Munitions has had in one year £522,400,000, of which £17,000,000 was either inaccurately set down in the books or else not accounted for at all. In a single year the expenditure of the country has been raised from two thousand to three thousand millions. We are governed apparently, according to *The Nation*, "by a locust swarm of officials, whose London establishment alone is computed to approach the strength of three army corps," and the report of the auditors reveals strange inefficiency, if not worse.

Lord Curzon, in a recent debate, likened the War Cabinet to a Durbar, "the Oriental assembly of Indian Princes and their overlord." Mr. Lloyd George sits in the Throne Room "with a barbed-wire entanglement of Committees," of which there have been 92. Our old Constitution is gone, and we have a bureaucracy archi-Prussian; more and more money will be required, and fresh means of providing it must be thought out, but it looks as if the luxury tax will not manage this difficult task.

MARGARET WYNNE NEVINSON.

The Birthday Fund.

The most important event of next Friday's delightful Birthday Party is the Presentation of the Birthday Fund to Mrs. Despard for the work of the Women's Freedom League.

Since we obtained our first success last February, you know how busy the League has been—we must have money to continue the work.

If you have not already sent me your contribution, please send it at once. Cancel your obligation as a Responsible Citizen, add to the satisfaction of the Beloved General whom we meet to honour, and increase your own joy in this Historic Rally of a Victorious Army of Free Women.

E. KNIGHT.

THE MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE BILL.

This Bill passed its second reading and was sent to Committee last week. It is a Government measure, and was introduced by Mr. Hayes Fisher, President of the Local Government Board, and it appears to be identical with the Bill which Lord Rhondda intended to introduce when he held that office. It is a permissive Bill, having for its object the extension of the powers of local authorities in the domain of maternity and child welfare. The powers asked for on behalf of the local authorities of England and Wales are already enjoyed by those of Scotland and Ireland, and they have been used with considerable benefit in Scotland.

Many of the schemes now in existence were set up by voluntary effort. However devoted and excellent that work has been, those responsible for institutions which rely on voluntary assistance would be the first to agree with Sir J. Butcher, M.P., that "in an enormous subject such as this, voluntary help is totally inadequate to deal with the matter." Its greatest utility, indeed, often lies in the object-lesson which it affords. The Bill now before Parliament shows that the object-lesson has not been wasted. In the year 1914-5, £1,049 was expended by voluntary bodies upon various efforts on behalf of mothers and their infants, while, in the same year, the local authorities expended the sum of £10,439, a total of £11,488. Three years later, 1917-8, £29,301 was expended by voluntary bodies and £92,985 by local authorities, a total of £122,286. For some years, the Government, through the Local Government Board and the Board of Education, has paid a grant of 50 per cent. of the expenses of such institutions as infant clinics and schools for mothers. Under this Bill the grant will be extended to other institutions and services which the local authorities will be permitted to establish.

Some, indeed, have already schemes in working order, the strict legality of which might be questioned under the letter of the law, as it now stands. The present Bill would legalise such schemes.

Describing to the House of Commons a centre which he characterised as "a perfect maternity and welfare system," Mr. Hayes Fisher said:

It consisted of four health visitors, a whole-time doctor, a dental clinic, a hospital for the more difficult cases of confinement, a centre to which women expecting to have babies could go for advice during the whole period of their ante-natal treatment, and also a centre from which food and milk could be distributed, under the certificate of the medical officer of health, to all women who were in a necessitous condition. That centre also consisted of a maternity home, very well arranged, in which there were sixteen beds.

Proceeding to work out the cost "of this most valuable system," it was found to amount to ¼d rate. The President put the question as to whether a tenant rated at £48 a year would object to pay 48 farthings, or 1s. a year, in order that the poorer people in the borough might be afforded the splendid opportunity "of having these comforts which his wife would probably have for herself in a similar time of need."

(So entirely have our ideas of expenditure been altered by the war that ¼d. rate can scarcely be expected to frighten the most parsimonious of rate-payers. A sum of £230,000 has been voted by the House for the present financial year for purposes of maternity and child welfare. It will be found on calculation that this sum represents, approximately, the expense of about three-quarters of an hour of the war.)

In addition to the activities mentioned above, local authorities will be able to provide crèches, day nurseries and clinics for children under 5, and convalescent homes for mothers and children. A service

of home helps will become possible, and, though their work may be less highly skilled than that of the visiting nurse, it will be equally appreciated in many homes during times of illness and strain.

The area of the authority to whom, under the Bill, powers are to be committed is to be determined in Committee, though the President of the Local Government Board gives it as his opinion that it is better to have schemes operating over a large, rather than a small, area. In Clause 2 it is enacted that every Council exercising these powers shall set up a Maternity and Child Welfare Committee, and that it shall not act under the powers conferred by the Bill until it has received and considered the report of this Committee. The local Council is recommended to appoint two-thirds of this committee from among its own members and the remaining one-third "from those who have not been elected, but who have special knowledge and experience of the subject." In defence of this policy of co-option, it was explained that "a great many people, especially women, are not going to face the amount of mud-slinging which is often associated with election to local bodies."

Politicians apparently regard the "mud-slinging" as a normal activity proper to elections, though, in its literal sense, the custom has almost become obsolete. In the wider sense it still prevails, but it surely ought not to be beyond the wit of our statesmen to insist on the substitution of more becoming election tactics. There is little doubt that many women will be co-opted upon these Maternity and Child Welfare Committees, and to accept nomination may be the first step towards becoming a direct representative of the people at a subsequent election.

The application of the powers of local authorities to such matters as babies, midwives, and crèches makes it necessary that a large number of women should be elected to these local bodies. At least one-half of the members of the Advisory Committees to be set up in connection with the Bill should consist of women. Under the Bill as it now stands, this would seldom be possible. It is to be remembered also that the recommendations of co-opted members have not the force of those emanating from the duly elected representatives of the people, with whom remains the power of the purse.

The Bill opens up new vistas of health and happiness, and its only opponents appeared to be those members who feared that the good might be the enemy of the best, and that the passing into law of this Bill might delay the formation of the promised Ministry of Health. But the general feeling was against the postponement of a measure which, as one of the members said, "goes along the line of patient effort," and which he asserted to be if "not the very finest, yet a good Bill."

E. M. N. C.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, July 5th.—**Birthday Party**, Caxton Hall, 6.30 p.m. Short speeches by Miss Anna Munro, Mrs. Whetton, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Mrs. Schofield Coates, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., and others. Music. Presentation to Mrs. Despard for the League Funds. Tickets 6d. each. Refreshments at moderate prices.

Saturday, July 13.—Hackney Branch Garden Meeting at 26, Pembury-road (near Hackney Downs Station, G.E.R.), 4.30 p.m. Speakers to be announced later.

Thursday, July 18.—Protest Meeting against Regulation 40 D, D.O.R.A., Central Hall, Westminster, 6.30 p.m. Speakers: Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., and others.

Tuesday, July 16.—HASTINGS. Miss Underwood. **Other Societies.**

July 14th.—Ashford P.S.A. Mrs. Mustard on "Women and To-Day," 3 p.m.

We draw special attention to

Mrs. Despard's Birthday Party at Caxton Hall, on Friday, July 5, at 6.30 p.m.

THE EDUCATION BILL (SCOTLAND).

It will be remembered that the Act of 1902, which abolished School Boards in England, did not apply to Scotland. In every parish in Scotland (where parishes are much larger than they are in England) there is a School Board, elected on the cumulative vote, for the sole purpose of administering the laws relating to education.

The new Bill, which was read a second time as THE VOTE went to press last week, makes great changes in the educational system of Scotland. It abolishes the School Boards, and replaces them by thirty-nine *ad hoc* authorities, elected by proportional representation on the single transferable vote, having the county as area—Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and Leith being scheduled as counties for the purposes of the Bill. As the areas are large, provision is made for the payment of travelling and personal expenses, so that all sections of the people may be represented. There seems to be no disqualification for candidature to these bodies.

The normal age for leaving school, after a full-time attendance, is raised from 14 to 15, and, unless a pupil has remained at school until the age of 17, there is to be three years' compulsory attendance at part-time continuation classes. But since the full working of the scheme, providing for the education of young people until the age of 18, will require the recruiting of a large body of teachers, the limit of age is to be 16 until the adequate number of teachers are provided. The exploitation of children, either in the interest of parents or employers, is to be prevented, so that, as the Secretary for Scotland said, "the child's energies are not sapped and impaired for what ought to be his main occupation at this stage of life." All the provisions of the Bill affect both sexes.

The new education authorities are to have greater powers, and new advisory councils are to be set up to assist them. The whole apparatus of codes and grants is to be swept away, and in the place of the latter a certain proportion of the ascertained expenditure of the local authority will be paid by the

central government. There is to be a uniform education rate throughout the county, and a special grant is to be made to any local authority which may find itself obliged to levy a rate higher than the average rate of the country. This is a new experiment, and will give, as is clearly desirable, the same opportunity to the child brought up in a remote Highland parish as to the child attending a Glasgow or Edinburgh school.

Referring to the new women electors, Captain Gilmour, M.P., said:—"I do not think they will quarrel with any efforts which Members of this House may make to improve the system of education. They of all the electors of this country will have a close and personal interest in that question."

It is to be hoped that the new Bill will raise the standard of education of the whole nation, and carry out the object which, three centuries ago, John Knox set before himself when he inaugurated a national system of education for Scotland. G. B. C.

FOR THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN LEFT AT HOME.

By Councillor J. T. MUSTARD.

Walking over some plots an hour ago I was stopped by some men with the question, "Oh, what about No. 152? We think he has been called up, and we should like to look after his plot for the benefit of his wife and children." I was pleased to tell them that the Central Committee of Allotments Association in the borough had recommended this same plan some months ago, and that we, in Clapton district, had decided at our general meeting last week to make a register of men called up, and to undertake the care of their plots.

I hope soon we shall make a further development of this plan by finding out as many families as possible in our district of men already at one of the Fronts, and seeing that they receive some of the surplus from our plots. It makes one indignant to know of many cases where such families are suffering. It is our bounden duty in every way to lessen their burdens and smooth away their anxieties. The War Pensions Committees are doing splendid work, but are sadly overburdened; hence some cases, hidden away perhaps, do not receive that ready assistance that is necessary.

Two typical cases will put the matter in clear light.

Mrs. A. came before a Juvenile Advisory Committee about her boy being placed in a suitable job, and in the course of the interview remarked, "I've been to see Mrs. —, and their boy has got a scholarship, but, you see, he has someone to push him and look after him, but my boy hasn't." The overwrought and overworked woman broke down as she went out. I tried to encourage her as she passed along the corridor, and gathered the usual information. She had to go out to supplement her allowance.

Mrs. B. is as nice a body as you could wish to meet. Her children are neat and clean. She has three and is expecting a fourth in September. As her children are all young she does not go out to work. The case was brought to my notice with the view of assistance being provided, as she was ailing. The cause was that she was being underfed.

Readers, pause and think clearly for a few minutes. If you have done so, find out similar cases in your own district, and if necessary consult the War Pensions Committee, but on no account omit to place the facts before your M.P., because he may be one of the 600 and more who were not in their places in the House of Commons when the question of separation allowances was discussed. (See last week's VOTE, page 300).

WOMEN AND THE LABOUR PARTY.

The first Conference of the reconstructed Labour Party was held on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of last week (June 26, 27 and 28), and the platform was built up on which the party will take its stand at the next General Election. The resolutions passed in reference to the position of women will be of peculiar interest to readers of THE VOTE.

Resolution IX. on the complete emancipation of women was divided into two parts with a preamble, setting forth:—

"That this Conference holds that the changes in the position of women during the war, in which they have rendered such good service, and the importance of securing to women as to men the fullest possible opportunities for individual development, make it necessary to pay special attention in the reconstruction programme to matters affecting women; and, in particular, the Conference affirms—

A.—WITH REGARD TO INDUSTRY ON DEMOBILISATION.

(i.) That work or maintenance at fair rates should be provided for all women displaced from their employment to make way for men returning from service with the Forces or other national work.

(ii.) That full enquiry should be made into trades and processes previously held to be unhealthy, or in any way unsuitable for women, but now being carried on by them, with a view to making recommendations as to the conditions of their further employment in such trades.

(iii.) That all women employed in trades formerly closed to them should only continue to be so employed at trade union rates of wages.

(iv.) That all trade unions should be urged to accept women members in all trades in which they are employed.

(v.) That the principle of 'Equal pay for equal work' should be everywhere adopted."

Sub-section (v.) caused considerable discussion. It was strongly supported by Miss Mary Macarthur, but eventually the amendment moved by the National Union of Clerks to substitute the words "similar duties" for "equal work" was accepted by the Conference.

Under Resolution VI. the Government had been reminded that it was pledged unconditionally to the restoration of "all the rules, conditions, and customs that prevailed in the workshops before the war." Though the word "woman" is not even mentioned in this resolution, there is no doubt that, among the changes to which reference is made as having been effected by the war, stands one which, above all others, affects the position of women in industry, *i.e.*, the abrogation of trade union rules and customs in regard to the employment of women in certain employments and processes, formerly reserved by men for themselves. On the surface, Resolution VI. and Resolution IX. seem to require reconciliation, though the passing of certain sub-sections of Resolution IX. may connote a recognition of the probability that to-morrow is more likely to resemble to-day rather than yesterday. It is unlikely that a woman would protest if displaced from her employment to make room for the individual man whose post she had temporarily filled. But, having been so repeatedly assured of their equality with men workers in intelligence, industry, output, skill and character (indeed, not infrequently their superiority has been affirmed), to expect the women to file out submissively from one door while men enter triumphantly at the other is asking too much from human nature. In face of the preponderance of the male trade union vote, it is useless to deny that the subject of the future position of women in industrial life is the storm-centre in the area of the relationship of women and the Labour Party. But the questions at issue may, after all, settle themselves, since the pressing need for increased production may make the continuance of women in those branches of industry, formerly closed to them, a matter of national necessity.

The sub-sections of Resolution IX., which relate to the civic rights of women, are in complete agree-

ment with the programme of the Women's Freedom League, and run as follows:—

(i.) That all legal restrictions on the entry of women to the professions on the same conditions as men should be abrogated.

(ii.) That women should have all franchises, and be eligible for election to all public bodies (including Parliament), on the same conditions as men.

(iii.) That systematic provision should be made for the inclusion of women in Committees or Commissions, national or local, dealing with any subjects that are not of exclusively masculine interest.

(iv.) That the present unjust provision of the income-tax law, under which the married woman is not treated as an independent human being, even in respect of her own property or earnings, must be at once repealed.

Sub-section (iii.) gave rise to an interesting enquiry as to the subjects which might be considered to be "of exclusively masculine interest." Like the jam offered to Alice at the Mad Tea Party, it was discovered that these subjects were only conspicuous by their absence. The Conference would evidently have been glad to have cut out the last clause of this resolution, but this was not possible, as no amendment to this effect had been sent in by an affiliated association.

It will be remembered that, by the constitution adopted at Nottingham last January, the Executive of the Labour Party is to consist of 22 members chosen from three lists by the whole body of delegates. Thirteen members, chosen from List A, represent the trade unions and affiliated societies. Five members from List B represent the organisations in the local constituencies, and four members from List C the women's organisations. There must, therefore, be not less than four women upon the Executive. No women's names were found on the lists representing the trade unions or the local organisations. The four members elected out of eight candidates in List C were Mrs. Philip Snowden, Dr. Ethel Bentham, Miss Susan Lawrence, L.C.C., and Mrs. Harrison Bell. Though nominated by women's organisations, there is no proof that the women elected represent the choice of the majority of women enrolled in the Labour Party, since the lists are voted on by the whole body of delegates in which at present women are in a small minority. It is somewhat strange to find that the name of Miss Mary Macarthur, who has been so successful an organiser of women's trade unions, does not appear in the list of successful candidates.

The Labour Party was the first of the political parties to accept woman suffrage as a plank in its political programme. From individual members we have received the warmest support, though the bulk of the party have not been in close enough touch with the organised women's movement to recognise that the ways of women and of labour were on converging lines. All parties have now found out that women are worth having. But even the report of this Conference, so friendly in tone towards women, leaves us with the confirmed conviction of the importance of keeping steadily in view our own principles, programme, and organisations. Those who have frequently attended public meetings and conferences know well that too much importance must not be attached to statements of pious opinion. Our own work, which none of the political parties are likely to do for us, is to focus and consolidate public opinion upon the reforms for which we stand, and to act as a driving force to compel the transmutation of amicable resolutions into Acts of Parliament.

E. M. N. C.

In answer to Lord H. Cavendish-Bentinck, Mr. Brace said that the numbers of children and young persons charged with juvenile crime were, respectively, 32,192 and 20,108. He said these figures were provisional, and might need correction. When he is having them corrected will he kindly give us the figures relating to the two sexes?

FRIDAY,
JULY 5,
1918.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 95, Nine Elms Lane, S.W. 8.

Contributions for Mrs. Tippett's Jumble Sale are coming in very slowly; there are only three weeks now in which to collect, as they should reach the secretary at the Settlement before July 30. This sale is a considerable help to our funds in the poorest quarter of the year, and we are anxious about its success. We are still looking for a holiday home, for six weeks from July 4, for little Eileen Cullimore, the "Tasmania" Cot baby, who wants country air, feeding up, care, and a certain amount of petting for that period. The ordinary payment would be made, and we should be grateful if readers could tell the Secretary of any responsible person or home to which she could be entrusted. Miss Riggall is thanked for 2s.; Mrs. Miller, jumble goods and a hamper of jams and garden produce; Mrs. Despard and Miss Burnett, flowers; Mrs. Delbanco, a blanket; Mrs. Hasker, "Peter Pan"; Miss Harvey, Christmas cards.

Glasgow's Lead.

"Glasgow has led the country once more," says the *Glasgow News*, "and in completing the list of voters for the fifteen constituencies into which the city is now divided, the Assessor has achieved a smart bit of work. The feature is the amazing number of women now enfranchised not only for municipal and other local elections, but—and for the first time—for Parliamentary contests. Nearly 189,000 women have qualified for the latter vote, and 214,000 for local government elections. Those who know the residential suburbs will not be surprised to learn that in Hillhead, Kelvingrove, Pollok, and Cathcart the women electors outnumber the men for municipal purposes."

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SKIRT; stock size; 19s. 11d.

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