

THE VOTE,
MAY 3, 1918.
ONE PENNY.

“40 D” Shall Go!

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XVII. No. 445.

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FRIDAY, MAY 3, 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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WOMEN'S AFFAIRS IN PARLIAMENT.

Conscription for Women.

Sir William Bull has announced his intention of introducing into the House of Commons a Bill for the Conscription of Women between the ages of 19 and 31. It was Sir William Bull who first suggested to the Speaker's Conference the differentiation in the age of men and women voters, on the ground that there are more women than men in the country. We think Sir William will agree that there are consequently more women than men who would come under a conscription scheme between 19 and 31 years of age, and these are just the women who would have no Parliamentary vote, whereas lads of 19 and upwards, if they are in the fighting forces, will have a vote. We rely on our friends in the House of Commons, immediately this Bill is introduced, to press for the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men. This is the least that women expect them to do.

Women and the Budget Proposals.

Income Tax.—Besides the £25 allowance for each child under 16, £25 is now to be allowed for a wife in the adjustment of a man's income tax. When introducing the Budget, on April 22, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, “I propose to make the children allowance apply to a wife also, and so far, much to my surprise, I have had no representations

from any women's suffrage societies suggesting the impropriety of proceeding on that basis.” Women may question the good taste of Mr. Bonar Law in deciding upon this form of reducing a man's income tax and placing women again in the same legal category as children, but they are not usually anxious to protest against any reduction of their husband's financial liabilities. We would strongly recommend, however, that the Treasury should pay to the wife the saving effected on this £25. It would be a recognition by the State that she is worth £25 a year to the man who has married her!

Stamp Duty on Cheques.—It is proposed to raise the stamp on each cheque to 2d. Business men are said to be organising opposition to this extra tax. We hope that business women will make their views on this matter known, and that their opinion will also be taken into consideration by our legislators.

Sugar Tax.—It is proposed to put a penny-farthing tax on every pound of sugar. This will be little short of a hardship on working-class mothers who have to cater for large families, and whose incomes are not inflated by the war. It means 3s. per head per year extra to the present price, if the ration remains at half a pound for each person. It will also fall specially hard on women home workers like those in Bethnal Green, the earnings of many of

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Join the Women's Freedom League.

Name _____

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Fill in your name and address and send it to the
Secretary, Women's Freedom League,
144, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1.

whom work out at 2½d., 3½d., and 4½d. per hour.

Increased Postage Rates.—Mr. Bonar Law proposed to abolish the 1d. post, making the charge for a letter 1½d., and raising the price for a postcard to 1d., instead of ½d. Mr. Law further proposes that the minimum charge for parcels carried by parcel post will be 6d. We greatly regret that it is considered necessary to increase the postal rates at this time, when so many millions of men are away from their homes serving in the Army. These men so much depend upon letters and parcels from home, and, as one speaker pointed out in the House of Commons, a poor woman who has four or five sons in the Army, and who writes to them regularly each week, will find it very difficult to afford the extra postage money. After all, it is the women who send the great majority of letters to the men in the Army, and supply them with the cheery news from home; and it is women who will pay the greatest part of this tax.

Luxury Tax.—Following the example set by the French Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to put a tax on luxuries. The method by which it is to be collected will be by stamp duty, the stamp to be affixed to the bill paid by the customer. The difficulty of this scheme lies, of course, in the definition of a luxury, and we can foresee many learned judges taking much time and money before deciding this knotty point. Women ought at once to be admitted to the Bar in order to help these learned gentlemen to deal with this fresh problem. Mr. Bonar Law said that he was going to adopt the French Government's method of appointing a Commission consisting of Government officials and representatives of traders, and that he would ask the House of Commons to set up a Select Committee to prepare schedules, suggesting that they should co-opt traders or "in their discretion take advice from them as they think best." The Women's Freedom League has communicated with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging that representatives of organised women should form half this Select Committee. We are quite sure that members of Parliament will wish to be fair in their definitions and descriptions of luxuries, but we consider that women must safeguard their own interests by seeing that taxes for luxuries shall be equally distributed between the sexes.

Discharged Women Munition Workers.—Speaking in the House of Commons on April 25, Mr. W. C. Anderson again returned to the matter of the dismissal of women munition workers. If the present big offensive had not taken place, Mr. Anderson said that probably 40,000 of these women would have been discharged. As a matter of fact 10,000 or 12,000 of them were discharged. He pointed out that the unemployment benefit allowed to these women was very small, and urged that wages, or substantial unemployment insurance, ought to be paid for a certain time during which women are looking round for new work.

These facts add strength to our declaration that the presence of women is emphatically needed in Parliament. F. A. U.

East St. Pancras Liberal, Radical and Labour Women's Association.

Mrs. Marshall presided at a meeting of the Association on April 23, when Miss F. A. Underwood and Dr. White spoke on the necessity of the withdrawal of 40 D Regulation (under the Defence of the Realm Act). Several members took part in the discussion, and a resolution was passed unanimously demanding the immediate withdrawal of the Regulation and the postponement of all similar legislation until women had expressed their views on the matter through the ballot-box. Copies of the resolution were afterwards sent to the Prime Minister, the local Members of Parliament, the Secretary of State for War, the Home Secretary, and Mr. Lees-Smith, M.P.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Wednesday, May 8.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café if required, 6d. Working Party, 5.30-7 p.m.

Thursday, May 9.—Mid-London Branch Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6.30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Miss N. D. Courtney on "The National Endowment of Families." Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café if required, 6d. Working Party, 5.30-7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 22.—Working Party, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 5.30-7 p.m.

PROVINCES.

Wednesday, May 15.—READING. Council of Women Meeting.

Friday, May 24.—BATH. Meeting at Grosvenor College (by kind permission of Miss Lock and Miss Parsons). Speaker: Miss Anna Munro.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Thursday, May 9.—IPSWICH. Meeting in the Small Co-operative Hall, Carr-street, 7.30 p.m. Miss Underwood on "The Use of a Vote."

Friday, May 10.—NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. Public meeting, Kinnard Hall, Saville-place, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Despard on "40 D."

Tuesday, May 7.—Free Church League for Woman Suffrage. Conference, Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, "Women and the New Spiritual Influence." Speakers: Miss Swetenham, Miss Lillian Stevenson, Mrs. Herman, Mrs. Holman. Chair and closing address: Miss A. Maude Royden. 3.45-5, 6-8 p.m. Admission free; reserved seats, 1s. Tea, 6d.

Monday, May 20.—Uxbridge Women's Suffrage Society, 69, High Street, Uxbridge, 7 p.m. Miss F. A. Underwood on "Women and Police Courts."

An Interesting Initiation.

An event of considerable interest has just taken place in the Masonic world. The Order of Universal Co-Masonry, which admits women to Masonic privileges on equal footing with men, has initiated Miss Alicia St. Leger Aldworth, great-great-granddaughter of the original woman Freemason. The story of the escapade by which her ancestress found her way into Freemasonry is as follows:—Viscount Doneraile was holding a Lodge in his own house in Ireland, and his daughter, a young girl of seventeen, secreted herself in an adjoining room. Owing to structural alterations which were going on in the house she was able to hear what took place, but in making a cautious retreat came face to face with her father's butler, the grim and faithful Tyler, with drawn sword in his hand, guarding the entrance. She was given the option of death or being at once made a Freemason, and thus bound to secrecy, and replied that above all things she desired to become a Freemason. Her jewel and apron have been preserved, also the chair used by the Master on the occasion. She afterwards became the Honourable Mrs. St. Leger Aldworth, and it is even supposed that she later occupied the chair of her Lodge.

A large gathering of distinguished Co-Masons assembled at the Temple, 13, Blomfield-road, Maida Vale, London, to witness the initiation of her descendant, who, despite her three-score years and ten, is actively engaged in war work and courageously braved the ordeal of the ceremony. Mrs. Annie Besant is the Head of the Order for the British Empire, and the ceremony was performed by Bishop Wedgwood, who is the Grand Secretary.

The Despard Arms.

123, Hampstead Road, N.W. 1.

Will spring cleaners remember us, and send rugs, tables, easy chairs, chests of drawers, looking-glasses, and any other useful articles which can be spared? We can make good use of them all.

THEY SUPPORT US!

DIVORCE IN THE BRITISH DOMINIONS OVERSEAS.

South Africa.

Of our great self-governing Dominions overseas, South Africa has been the most backward in recognising the political rights of women, yet the Union, under Roman-Dutch law, shows equal consideration to the two sexes on marriage and divorce.

The economic independence of the wife can always be secured by an ante-nuptial contract, which may be compared to a marriage settlement, but which is much more useful and far-reaching in its effects. Such a contract is accessible to the poorest. It is drawn up by a notary, signed by the contracting parties, and registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds. Under this contract, (1) There is no community of property, so that the injustice of levying income-tax on the joint income of husband and wife would thus be impossible in South Africa; (2) Neither party is responsible for the debts of the other, contracted before or after marriage; (3) The wife has the sole control of her property, and the husband has no right to alienate it; (4) Property made over by the husband to the wife is subject to alienation or reservation by her alone. If the prospective wife neglects to secure the ante-nuptial contract her position is deplorable; there was a case of such neglect at Johannesburg, and the unhappy woman, owner of two prosperous shops, was left penniless, as, on the death of her husband, his relatives claimed all her possessions. Divorce can be obtained for adultery on the part of either spouse, and such divorce is based upon Scriptural authority (1 Corinthians, vii. 16). Malicious desertion, or desertion without good reason, is also a ground for divorce. This has sometimes been taken advantage of by persons married in England—the Scottish law recognises desertion as a legitimate plea for divorce. The period of the desertion varies for the different provinces of the Union: in Natal, it must be eighteen months; in the Transvaal, it is a matter for the discretion of the High Court to decide. After the dissolution of marriage for adultery, the guilty parties may not inter-marry. This regulation is frequently evaded, as divorce is obtained for desertion even where there has been infidelity. There are slight variations in the Divorce Law for the different provinces, as there is in the marriage law; in Cape Province the marriage of a white with a coloured person is legal, in the other provinces it is illegal.

Dominion of Canada.

The recent progress of Woman's Suffrage in Canada will, doubtless, lead to rapid reforms in the Divorce Law, but the provinces, with the exception of Quebec, have long been in advance of England in this respect. The proximity of the United States, with its innumerable State marriage and divorce laws, cannot fail to have affected the Dominion, and to have stimulated it to consider the woman's side of the question. At the time of the British North American Act (1867), there were already courts of divorce in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but none in Ontario or Quebec; the latter province being still under the ante-Napoleonic code of laws which existed there at the time we conquered it from the French in 1759. When Prince Edward's Island and British Columbia were admitted to the Union they had divorce courts of their own, but Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon territory have to apply for divorces to the Dominion Parliament. A committee on divorce, composed of nine senators, is elected each session. Divorce is granted on the ground of adultery only, and the wife can apply for it on this plea as well as the husband. As the woman is usually the poorer partner, any wife who

can show that she has a good case can get the Senate to force her husband to pay the expenses of the action. In Quebec, if a wife leave her husband, he has a right to compel her to return to him, and a man may procure a "Séparation de corps" because of his wife's adultery, but she can only leave her husband if his concubine is kept in the house. Even if a woman be legally separated from her husband, she cannot sell her property without his consent.

New Zealand and Australia.

Women have had the vote for twenty-five and sixteen years respectively in New Zealand and Australia, therefore the Divorce Law is absolutely fair and equal in regard to sex. The West Australia Act, passed in 1912, is the best of the Divorce Acts in the States of the Commonwealth, and it will probably serve as a model for the Federal Act, which will unify the law throughout the island continent. The West Australia Act recognises the following as valid grounds for divorce: (1) Adultery on either side; (2) Desertion for three years; (3) Habitual drunkenness; (4) Incurable insanity; (5) Imprisonment for a term of five years (three years in New South Wales and Victoria Acts). The New Zealand Divorce Act dates from 1898, although amendments were introduced in 1904 and 1908. It is somewhat more comprehensive than the West Australia Act, which followed it after an interval of fourteen years. Failure to support a wife or habitual cruelty are additional grounds for divorce. Confinement in a lunatic asylum for an aggregate period of seven years is also a sufficient reason for the dissolution of the marriage tie.

In consideration for the children, the Dominion and the Commonwealth are far in advance of most of the countries of the world, and the facilitation of divorce is really in the interest of these little ones. A child who is brought up in an atmosphere of suspicion and hatred, who is a witness of constant bickerings and querulous complaints, can have no chance of a healthy and vigorous development. It is to the rising generation we must look for so much in the way of reform and reconstruction that we should be most unwise, as well as unjust, to handicap our young people in any way on the threshold of life. "Let childhood ripen in children." Such maturing is only possible in the sunshine of happiness, and it should be the first object of every well-ordered State to secure such a condition for the childhood of its people.

MARGARET HODGE.

Women Footballers' Record.

The women footballers connected with the Dagenham works of the Sterling Telephone and Electric Company, Limited, in 17 matches have had but eight goals scored against them and have registered 78 goals. They defeated four hitherto undefeated teams.

BRITAIN AND INDIA ASSOCIATION.

PUBLIC MEETING · AT THE
CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER,

ON INDIA'S POSITION TO-DAY

MONDAY, MAY 6th, at 7 p.m.,

Speakers—J. M. PARIKH, ON
"WHY INDIA WANTS HOME RULE."
HENRY S. L. POLAK, ON
"INDIA'S RELATIONS TO THE
DOMINIONS AND COLONIES."

ADMISSION FREE.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 240.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, May 3rd, 1918.

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EDITORIAL.

The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS. if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

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At Home and Abroad post free, 6/6 per annum.

CALLED UP.

Are we to attribute the roseate hue of the forms recently left at our doors to the working of some poetic mind in official circles, or is it to taken as an instance of the unconscious relation between the outward visible sign and the thing signified? All through the long night, which marked the struggle for the vote, women looked forward to the hour of their enfranchisement as watchers look for the dawn, and it is, indeed, one of life's ironies that the breaking of the new day should be coincident with the darkest hour of the greatest tragedy in history.

But women would be unconscious objectors if, having demanded that the duties of full citizenship should be laid upon them, they should then refrain from taking up those duties because the hour of the summons is unpropitious.

We have signed the pink forms with due solemnity. We have been "called up." Henceforth, we are citizen soldiers, with the duty laid upon us of attacking all forms of tyranny and injustice, of prejudice and intolerance (so frequently generated by ignorance). It is to be our part to attack these dark forces with knowledge and courage, tenacity, patience, and determination.

The soldier who is "called up" goes into training for a few months, and then his training time is over. It is followed by a time of strenuous action, sacrifice, and it may be by suffering, or even death. Sooner or later there is an end to his responsibilities. But for us there is no end of our training, since as yet there has been no serious suggestion that we should be disfranchised at a certain age to save the country from the disasters which might be brought upon it by the decisions of an electorate suffering from senile decay.

In a few months we shall be called upon to register our newly acquired votes. Every woman is now called upon to be "in training," and to educate herself by every means in her power to deal with the questions which will come before the next Parliament. The younger women are not absolved from this duty, though they will not be able to vote at the next election. But persons of enlightenment know to how great an extent education comes from the young, and the voters of the future may, if they choose, be pioneers "steady moving to the front."

Hitherto, quite naturally, we have concerned ourselves principally with those subjects which we have been taught to regard as our sphere—the questions which specially concern women's work or her status, with those relating to education or the care of children, to the matters considered under the head of social reform. We have, perhaps, felt that more purely political questions, upon which differences of opinion might lead to dissensions, should be left until the vote was won. In the future, the whole

expanse of politics must be our sphere. We must know the arguments for and against Home Rule and Protection, as well as we know the reasons upon which we base our demand that "40 D Must Go!" Our power in the future will largely depend upon our knowledge. We do not merely want to know enough to cast a vote at the next election; we want to retain a continuous influence upon the political life and thought of the country.

The choice is now before us of joining one of the existent political forces, or of remaining free lances. Writing in last week's *Vote*, the Secretary of the Woman's Freedom League says: "Women having now secured a measure of political enfranchisement, the Women's Freedom League no longer requires its ordinary members or Executive Committee to pledge themselves to abjure party organisations, but gives them freedom to speak on any platform, and work for any object as long as they act as individuals, and do not identify the League with any of these outside object." There is no doubt that women will receive a warm welcome in the several party organisations, and it will now be our part, individually, to make our choice as to whether we will accept any of the invitations which are tendered to us to identify ourselves with any particular political party. Our decision will, doubtless, rest upon the strength of our convictions in regard to the aims and programme of the party which most nearly represents our own political outlook. Volumes might be written upon the history, the advantages and defects of the party system, but they would not give us much practical help in making up our mind on the subject. We, who are now entering politics, have found the party system waiting for us. We did not create it, and we recognise that it is, in many respects, irrational and out of date, and that its tendency is to lead inevitably to the subjection of the independent judgment both of the electorate and of the House of Commons. At the same time the most sanguine of us could hardly expect to destroy it before the next election. The fissiparous tendencies which, for many years, have been manifesting themselves in the organised political parties may be a symptom of more intelligence and more independence. But, unfortunately, the electorate is apt to take its politics more submissively than it takes the weather. Indolence of mind and lack of sincerity are, indeed, the besetting sins of the party system.

But, with all its defects, the party system connotes co-operation for a common end, and this is the ideal of citizenship. To join the party organisations might, conceivably, be the means by which women could make their voting power an active force not only to secure full and complete equality as between men and women in all departments of national life, but also to build up the fabric of a State founded upon justice and the desire for the common good. E. M. N. C.

MAKE SURE OF YOUR VOTE! Registration Guide.

Every woman over 21 who has not yet received the Pink Form A should ask for it at her Town Hall.

Removal from one part of London to another or from one county to the next county does not disqualify.

If you rent an unfurnished room and hire your furniture from the landlord you may be qualified.

Many daughters and sons living at home will also have a vote.

Read the Women's Freedom League "Registration Guide to the Next Election, price 1d., and in any difficulty write or call at 144, High Holborn (Registration Guide).

"40 D" SHALL GO!

A Triumph! Central Hall Crowded Out!

Last week we appealed to our readers and supporters to crowd out the Central Hall, Westminster, at the Mass Protest Meeting, on April 29. They did it—magnificently! From that great meeting a resolution of unanimous and uncompromising opposition to 40 D went forth to the Government, which it will have to heed. It was the first strong and united voice, but it will be followed by others in all parts of the country from women and men, who are determined that this evil thing shall not be!

MRS. DESPARD, from the chair, struck the note at the outset that what dishonours women, no matter of what nationality, deeply dishonours men, and poisons national life at its source. She rejoiced that there was a mixed platform of men and women standing together in opposition to the Regulation, and that so great an assembly of men and women had gathered to support them. The Regulation was not passed by Parliament, but was an Order in Council, issued when Parliament was not in session. It was not designed, she said, to protect soldiers from temptation and corruption, but to make them good fighting animals. To declare that vice could be made safe for men was "damnable, lying hypocrisy," she added. "Morality is God's order. There can be no morality where there is selfishness on one side and sacrifice on the other."

The resolution, proposed by Miss Esther Roper, was as follows:—

That this meeting, convened by the Women's Freedom League and the Independent Women's Social and Political Union, views with horror the reintroduction of the principle of the old useless and discredited Contagious Diseases Acts, with all their shameful outrage and injustice to women, and demands the immediate withdrawal of Regulation 40 D of the Defence of the Realm Act, issued by Order in Council on March 22, without the knowledge of the representatives of the people, and in spite of the opposition both inside and outside the House of Commons, in face of which the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was dropped last session.

MISS ROPER declared that to be governed under D.O.R.A. made even votes useless, but Mr. Macpherson had said that he knew what women feel about this degrading insult; he knew that they would prefer to stand by the prostitutes, and not receive special favour; they were determined to face the evil fair and square. The Regulation included all women; they were requested not to loiter in the streets or talk to soldiers except for as short a time as possible. But the Regulation would not affect the trouble; it had been conclusively proved that there was no "safety" in medical examination. If a woman refuses to submit to examination, under 40 D, it will be taken as a proof of guilt. "Do not submit under any circumstances!" was Miss Roper's advice, and it evoked loud applause. She protested strongly against the assumption of "fear-full" old gentlemen that punishment was the only way to deal with the evil; they had no faith in freedom and sympathy, nothing but blind trust in repression. War always meant the enslavement of women. The Duke of Alva took 2,000 prostitutes with his army to crush the Netherlands, but could it be said that there was much improvement to-day, when 300 men visited 15 women? Miss Roper made an earnest appeal to young women to fight the evil, to have done with punishment, to stretch out the hand of fellowship to unhappy women, and help them back again to self respect and life.

MR. LEES SMITH, M.P., seconding the resolution, spoke from the point of view of men. He maintained from personal experience as a private that the great majority of men were leading clean lives, and will continue to do so if the War Office will leave them alone, but if it lays down regulations recognising the necessity for vice, it will mean

indulgence by young men, hitherto without reproach, but who are sensitive to the military atmosphere and fall in easily with the military code. From the point of view of health 40 D will prove a tragic delusion. The C.D. Acts failed to protect soldiers; 40 D is worse; the only result will be havoc of soul and body among clean young men in whose way the War Office has deliberately put temptation. Lord Derby's speech in the House of Lords indicated that, in view of the storm of agitation which the War Office knew was likely to arise, the line of defence would be to repudiate the charge that a man and a woman were judged by different standards. Stress would be laid on the right of a woman, infected by a soldier, to accuse him to his commanding officer, and if convicted, he could be sentenced by court-martial to two years' imprisonment; a woman would only get six months. How many women know of this right? asked Mr. Smith; and how many, if they knew, would put their heads into the lion's mouth by telling the military authorities? If they did, the man would be examined and questioned, and it would be the business of the authorities to track down the woman and prosecute her before the courts. It will be no protection to women; as with laws dealing with solicitation, it may be argued that in theory they are equal, but in operation there is great inequality. For every man prosecuted under 40 D there will be 50 or 100 women, said Mr. Smith. There is no hope of success in dealing with the trouble until the higher military authorities adopt a complete and fundamental change of attitude towards the whole question of sexual vice; moral questions can only be permanently settled by moral means. The lesson of the C.D. Acts in this country, and the regulation of vice in Continental countries, is that attempts to make vice easy and safe increase vice and venereal disease. Only when this lesson is learned can there be real constructive action.

MISS LIND-AR-HAGEBY, who strongly supported the resolution, said that for many decades men have tried to legislate against prostitutes by penalising them, while leaving their clients alone. Circumstances alter cases. British women now have the vote, and when they fully understand what 40 D means there will be such a storm of indignation that such regulations will be found impossible. The war has brought about great changes; women are realising their powers, physical, mental, and spiritual, and men are learning what women can do. The ancient view of immorality cannot hold good to-day; laws which lower men's ideas of women increase vice and venereal disease. Ignorance, she insisted, is the worst enemy; women must not shrink from investigating the subject; there must be education and knowledge. The Regulation is based on a fallacy. How can the police tell whether it is the man or the woman who solicits or invites? Medical examination, too, is admittedly not infallible, and medical knowledge of the subject is in a state of flux. It is dangerous, therefore, to put such power in the hands of the authorities; a woman may be convicted on mistaken or unreliable evidence. Under the Act of 1864 "loose women" in certain military areas might be ordered to undergo medical examination; then followed the Contagious Diseases Acts, which Josephine Butler fought so strenuously; now we have Regulation 40 D, followed quickly by the Sexual Offences Bill, introduced in the House of Lords, containing the objectionable features of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill killed last session by the opposition of women, and such dangers as secret trials and suppression of public evidence "in the interests of morality." This is not the time when such a Bill can be made law. It is for us to

discard these old and discredited methods. What is wanted is education in matters of sex and morality, a new ideal of marriage, and an equal standard of morality for men and women. Sexual indulgence is not necessary for men or women; if men are not taught control, they will indulge. Women must refuse to marry men who are not clean. A new moral fastidiousness is imperative for the sake of men, of women, and of the children of the future.

Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY warmly supported the resolution. To try to make vice safe was the root of the difficulty; if vice is wrong, it is wrong, whether safe or not. The question to be settled is: Can men and women remain constant? Till that is done meetings and laws are in vain. The longer he lived, the more he hated law, said Mr. Lansbury. We must get to the bedrock and understand that each individual must examine heart and conscience on these points. Some people allowed the Government, or the Church, or the Press to be keepers of their consciences, but it is the individual who counts. Progress is not made by Acts of Parliament and Regulations. If 40 D is allowed to remain and the evil is cloaked, there will be a cry for more Regulations and Acts when peace comes. Poverty and low wages for women produce the evil; too much money fosters similar indulgence. When he thought of conditions in war time, and what is likely in peace, he was constrained to cry, Whence shall help come? "It will come only from people like you and me. Do not let us be content with striking at this great evil, but let us raise the banner of the sacredness and oneness of human life throughout the world."

The resolution, on being put to the meeting, was carried unanimously, and with enthusiasm.

In proposing a vote of thanks to Mrs. Despard and the speakers, Dr. Clifford added a word of encouragement. He said he had taken part with Josephine Butler in her great fight, and pointed out that the atmosphere was more favourable to-day than when she won the victory, for the evil could be talked of openly, and those who fought it were not ostracised. War and vice were closely associated, but militarism was on its deathbed, and in its place must come brotherhood, justice, and universal liberty. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, in seconding, said that force is the enemy of liberty, and she trusted that women would bring into political life the law of growth and development.

This memorable meeting, convened by the Women's Freedom League and the Independent Women's Social and Political Union, was supported by:—

Catholic Women's Suffrage League, Committee of Social Investigation and Reform, Fabian Women's Group, Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, London Women's Council of the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Manchester, Salford and District Women's Trades and Labour Council, National Industrial and Professional Women's Suffrage Society, Petersfield Suffrage Society, Qui Vive Marchers Corps, Southend-on-Sea Women's Adult School, and Women's Labour League.

Many expressions of sympathy and support were received from those who were unable to attend the meeting. Miss Underwood read letters and telegrams from the Rev. F. B. Meyer, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. P. W. Raffan, M.P., Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., Lady Emily Lutyens, Mrs. Saul Solomon, the Northampton Women's International League, Falmouth Society of Friends, and Southend-on-Sea Adult School.

Among those present were the Dean of Lincoln, Mr. J. Allen Baker, M.P., Mr. H. J. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. Walter Roch, M.P., and Mrs. Roch, Lady Brassey, Mrs. Olive Schreiner, Mrs. Abadam, Sir Charles Tarring, Mr. Maurice Gregory, Mrs. Lees Smith, Miss d'Alberti, Mr. Williams, Mr. C. E. Maurice, the Rev. W. C. and Mrs. Roberts, and Mrs. Wheatly.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.

40 D. THE REGULATION OF VICE.

Another urgent and important Campaign is upon us. Foiled in the attempt to revive the iniquitous provisions of the detested Contagious Diseases Acts by means of the late innocent-seeming Criminal Law Amendment Bill of unhappy memory, the men who rule us have now—by Regulation 40 D of the Defence of the Realm Act—reintroduced the State Regulation of Vice in this country.

Long years ago the Women's Freedom League had its mind made up to oppose to the bitter end any such action.

Our machinery for agitation stands ready to be set in motion—money must come in freely for this renewal of the fight.

As the matter is urgent the expenses will be heavy. Delay is dangerous. We must have this shameful blot upon the Statute Book, this death-knell to the moral life of Britain—as the great pioneer, Josephine Butler, termed it—withdrawn at once.

Friends and fellow-workers, we must stand together, shoulder to shoulder. Send your cheques, and notes, and postal orders as quickly as you can, and make them as large as possible.

E. KNIGHT.

144, High Holborn,
W.C. 1.

The Rev. Major Scott, of George Street Congregational Church, Croydon, last Sunday morning declared his full sympathy with protests against 40 D, and strongly urged not only women, but men, to study the question, and realise the moral danger involved.

Letters to Ministers of State.

The following letters have been sent to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for War:—

Rt. Hon. Sir George Cave, K.C., M.P., Home Office, Whitehall.

Sir,—Referring to your statement in the House of Commons on Thursday, April 11, to the effect that the Criminal Law Amendment Bill would be introduced in the House of Lords, which, we take it, refers to the Sexual Offences Bill, may we remind you of your kind promise to receive a deputation of organised women's societies before the Criminal Law Amendment Bill is proceeded with in the House of Commons? We should be glad to have the opportunity of putting before you the objections of organised women to some of the clauses in the Sexual Offences Bill, recently read for the first time in the House of Lords.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully, FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD.

Rt. Hon. Viscount Milner, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., War Office, Whitehall.

Sir,—I am venturing to ask if you will kindly receive a deputation of women's societies, organised by the Women's Freedom League, the object of which is to put before you the views of organised women (and the deputation would represent many thousands of organised women) in regard to Regulation 40 D (under the Defence of the Realm Act).

In the meantime I take the liberty to send you the resolution which was passed recently by our National Executive Committee.

As you may know, we are organising a public meeting against this Regulation, and I think that it would be in the interests both of the Government and of the public that you should hear and discuss with us our objections to the enforcement of this Regulation. The following societies are supporting our resolution:—

Catholic Women's Suffrage League, Committee of Social Investigation and Reform, Fabian Women's Group, Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, Independent Women's Social and Political Union, London Women's Council of the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Manchester, Salford and District Women's Trades and Labour Council, National Industrial and Professional Women's Suffrage Society, Petersfield Suffrage Society, Qui Vive Marchers Corps, Women's Labour League.

I may add that we have addressed fairly large meetings of women on the subject of this Regulation, about which they have expressed strong indignation and the opinion that all this kind of legislation should be postponed until women have had the opportunity of making their views on it known through the ballot-box.

Hoping that you will have the kindness to consider this request for a deputation,—I am, Sir, yours faithfully, FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD.

Formal acknowledgments have been received of both these letters.

THEY SUPPORT US!

WOMEN IN WAR TIME. Munition Workers Fight Fire.

Loud cheers in the House of Commons greeted Mr. Kellaway's tribute to the bravery of women munition workers in a recent outbreak of fire in London. He said that within four minutes of the alarm being given 20 women who had been trained in fire drill had brought out the hose on the fire, which was in a shed filled with live cartridges and with cartridge paper, stored up for the previous Russian Government. They stuck to their posts until some of the men present appealed to them to throw down the hose because the danger was so great. They kept the fire under control until the London Fire Brigade arrived, and it was the testimony of the Fire Brigade that but for the women's efforts the whole of the great munition factory would have been burned to the ground.

Freedom Leaguer Decorated.

Sister Mary Turnbull (Territorial Force Nursing Service), our Hampstead branch member, was decorated at the King's Investiture at Buckingham Palace, on April 27, with the Royal Red Cross. Mobilised on August 10, 1914, as staff nurse (later promoted to Sister), she admitted the first patient to the First Eastern General Military Hospital at Cambridge, and has worked there continuously ever since.

Deputation to the Ministry of Food.

Last Thursday afternoon Miss Raleigh, as an ordinary consumer and member of the public, and Miss F. A. Underwood, representing the Women's Freedom League, had an interview with Mr. Sydney Walton, at the Ministry of Food. Miss Raleigh urged that what the country needed most was increased production by the growing of vegetables and beetroot, especially for sugar, and more time given to a scheme for the breeding of animals. She pointed out that many more women should be employed on the land, but the Government should see that the conditions under which these women worked, and the wages they received, should be greatly improved. Miss Raleigh further dealt with the question of imports, the closing of shops, and the system of rationing, making various suggestions, which Mr. Walton asked should be forwarded by letter.

Miss Underwood urged that there should be no differentiation in the rationing of growing boys and girls, nor in that of men and women engaged on heavy work, and asked that every householder who applied for extra sugar for making jam, when fruit was plentiful and cheap, should be allowed to have a reasonable amount of extra sugar in preference to so much being allowed to manufacturers of jam. She pointed out that the person who sold the fruit should give the householder a voucher for the amount sold, and that the householder should give a guarantee that jam would be made. Miss Underwood recommended that more coupons should be available for taking some of the bacon surplus in many shops before it was allowed to go bad. Finally she asked that vegetarians should be allowed more fats and cheese in consideration of the fact that they did not use their meat coupons. She specially urged that vegetarian restaurants should have a bigger supply of margarine, butter, and cheese than it was possible to secure at present. The deputation was received very sympathetically, and attention was promised by the Ministry of Food to the various points raised.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

"Will the Poor Law Go?" was the subject of Mrs. Nevinson's address at the Minerva Café on April 24. Mrs. Nevinson declared that she was not in love with the Poor Law, but it had become much more humane during the last five years than it had been at any time since 1834, when it was particularly harsh on the people who came under its administration. The word "pauper" had been in legal disuse since 1913; "Workhouses" had been re-christened "Rest Houses," or various other names decided upon by the local authorities; old married people were allowed to live together instead of being quartered in different parts of the building, and no one could now be disfranchised if he had to enter a workhouse infirmary through illness. The speaker reminded her audience that Guardians were first appointed to look after the poor in 1782. The problems with which they had to deal were not always easy. In the early part of the 19th century many able-bodied people refused to work, and whole harvests rotted because those who could get out-door relief without difficulty preferred it to working for the wages offered to them. Hence the subsequent rule that no able-bodied man or woman should be given outdoor relief, although the accommodation in the workhouse assured that no man or woman need die of starvation.

The Reconstruction Committee proposed to do away with Boards of Guardians, the idea being that there should be elected *one* rating body in the locality, instead of people elected for one thing only. It was suggested that persons with special knowledge of certain subjects should be co-opted to this rating body, but Mrs. Nevinson contended that people who were not elected were not really responsible to anyone for the spending of money which they voted. She also wanted to know what would happen to the poor, the imbeciles, the vagrants, the able-bodied persons who found themselves without the means of subsistence through unemployment, the children, and the deserted women, who now all came under the care of the Poor Law Guardians? Could it be possible for a local authority which was already overburdened with so many other matters to add this work to their activities? In Hampstead the Guardians had 150 meetings a year to deal exclusively with the needs of the poor. It would surely be difficult to transfer this detailed work to the ordinary local authority.

Mrs. E. M. N. Clark, presiding at this meeting, said that Mrs. Nevinson had been a Poor Law Guardian for fourteen years, and if the community lost the services of women like Mrs. Nevinson, it would certainly pay dearly for it. Mrs. Clark thought, however, that Poor Law reform was much belated.

Drawing-room Meeting at Earl's Court.

By the kind permission of Mrs. F. E. Smith, a delightful drawing-room meeting was held at 83, Earl's Court-road last Saturday afternoon. Mrs. Despard spoke on "The Programme of the Women's Freedom League," and declared that the enfranchisement of 6,000,000 women was only a partial victory, and in one sense a partial defeat, because the demand of all women suffragists had been for the Parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as men, not for women of over thirty years of age and for lads of nineteen years! This meant that the Women's Freedom League had gathered its forces together, and with renewed energy was demanding the further extension of the franchise to women, and concentrating its effort on securing equality of opportunity, responsibility, and of rights for women with men throughout life. The League was at present engaged in a great moral campaign, insisting that there should be a higher moral code and a single standard of morality for the sexes. New members were obtained; there was a good sale of THE VOTE and of other literature, and a good collection was taken. Miss Underwood took the chair, and on behalf of the Women's Freedom League conveyed a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. F. E. Smith for the loan of her room and her kind hospitality.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 240.

FRIDAY,
MAY 3,
1918.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 93, Nine Elms-lane, S.W. 8.

Received in connection with Mrs. P. H. Miller's sale at Campden Hill-road, in addition to gifts already acknowledged:—Per Hon. Mrs. Forbes, £15 11s. 8d.; per Mrs. Geo. Lewis, £1; per Mrs. Hasker, £2 10s.; per Mrs. Miller, £16; Mrs. Roth and Miss Latham (Home Restaurant), per Miss Cole, 10s.; W. R. Snow, Esq., £2 and another £3 to spend on luxuries for the Settlement from the sale; Mrs. H. McKenzie, 5s.; A Stallholder, £5 0s. 6d.; per the same stallholder, £1 10s.; General Sweny, per Miss Wilder, £1; Miss Brereton, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. John Russell, 15s.; Messrs. Appleyard, Artox Flour, per Miss Cole; Mr. W. G. Smith, J.P., of Kingston, soap (per Miss Cole); various contributions in kind from Mrs. Whitlock; Miss M. Holmes; the Misses Haward; Miss Roberts and other friends, per Mrs. Bennett; Mrs. and Miss Hart; Miss Margaret Kennedy; Mrs. Thomas; Mrs. Clark; Miss E. M. Baker. Stallholders' takings: Mrs. Miller, £7 11s.; Mrs. Walter Carey, £1 5s. 6d.; Miss A. M. Cole, £5 1s. 9½d.; Miss Wilder, £1 1s. 6d.; Hon.

Mrs. Forbes, £10 0s. 3d.; "Peter," 6d.; Mrs. Lewis, £1; Mrs. Bailey, £4 12s. 9d.; two anonymous stallholders, £34 19s. 6d.; Mr. P. H. Miller (sale of drawing), £1; Settlement Stall, £2 2s. 9d. Provisions from Mrs. Tritton, and toys and jumble goods from Miss Kearton, are also gratefully acknowledged.

BRANCH NOTE.

Reading.

A conference of representatives of women's societies was held on April 24 at Messrs. Hickie's room, Friar-street, to consider the desirability of forming a Women's Council. Miss Anna Munro, President of the Reading branch of the Women's Freedom League, was in the chair. About fifty organisations were represented. Miss Munro explained the objects of the Council, which, she said, would be non-party and would deal with local matters concerning women from the women's point of view. After a good discussion and a number of questions had been answered, it was unanimously decided to form a Council, the next meeting to be on May 15.

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