

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN of the WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.
NON-PARTY.

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ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1926

OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the powers already obtained to elect women in Parliament, and upon other public bodies, for the purpose of establishing equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

A SWEDISH WOMAN PIONEER.

THE death of Ellen Key, reported recently, is an irreparable loss, not only to Sweden, but to the Woman's Movement all over the world. Though of late years she had been living in retirement at "Strand," the country place in South Sweden purchased partly out of her own literary earnings and partly by contributions from admirers, hers was still a name to conjure with in all progressive circles. British women have a special link with this great Swedish pioneer, for the name Key is really a contraction of Mackay, her ancestors having come from Scotland and settled in Sweden during the Thirty Years' War.

Ellen Key was the daughter of Emil Key, a member of the Swedish Riksdag and Countess Sophia Posse, and was born at Sundholm, in the Province of Smaland, Sweden, on December 11, 1849, where her mental powers were early recognised by Björnson. In 1868 she moved with her parents to Stockholm, where she began to contribute to *Idun*, the famous Swedish feminist paper. In 1880, she embarked on a teaching career in Stockholm, and in addition gave lectures in history and literature at an Institute for the working classes. These lectures soon attracted such large audiences, that by 1899 Ellen Key abandoned teaching altogether and gave herself up to a lecturing career. "We seemed to be in a trance as we listened to her, so wonderful was her inspiration," the writer of this article was told by one who had known her well and attended her lectures. "When Ellen Key lectured in public she seemed far removed above her audience, as if speaking from another world."

In 1900 Ellen Key began to travel, and spent the next few years visiting Europe and the United States. She was particularly popular with the American people. She also lectured extensively in Germany, Austria and Holland. In 1910 she purchased "Strand," where she spent the rest of her life, and where she was visited by all the distinguished people of her generation, Royalty included.



As a writer Ellen Key had a large output, and most of her books and pamphlets have been translated into various languages. Her earliest work consisted of a series of biographical studies of literary personalities, mostly Swedish. Other well-known books included "The Children's Age," dealing with Child Welfare and the protection of Mothers, which was translated into German, Dutch, French and English, *Tankebilder* (Ideas) and *Lifslinjer* (Lines of Life) philosophical treatises, and various brochures upon the status of woman, the peace movement, and popular education. Altogether she wrote more than thirty books.

As a Feminist Ellen Key held a somewhat unusual position. Equality between the sexes, in all departments of life, was the chief plank in her platform, yet this did not deter her from maintaining that marriage and motherhood was woman's primary occupation, and contending passionately that woman's freedom did not consist in being equal to man, but in striving for the perfection of the characteristics of her own nature. As a recent writer in the *Westminster Gazette* puts it—"Ellen Key pleaded for women to have the courage of their natures by getting rid of the inhibitions imposed, not only by men but by women themselves." Her views on Marriage were frequently misunderstood, for she stoutly maintained in her writings, that love, not law, was the only sanction

of marriage. Nevertheless she always emphasised that, in principle, lifelong monogamy formed the noblest and happiest union amongst human beings. In education she believed in home training rather than the often stereotyped curriculum of the school, and she thought every girl ought to have at least a year's training in the domestic arts, including the care of children.

A passionate sincerity was the outstanding feature in Ellen Key's personality, and permeated every portion of her speech and writings. Love of humanity, enthusiasm, and an ever present idealism in her outlook upon life, were also marked characteristics.

OUR WORK IN THE STRIKE.

What is the work of the Women's Freedom League in the present grave national crisis?

First and foremost to attend to our own distinctive business; to persevere with the organisation of the two demonstrations in which we are joining—the Peace Pilgrimage culminating in the great mass meeting on June 19th, and the great Equal Political Rights Procession and Demonstration on July 3rd; to carry on the routine of our Society, and to bring out week by week our paper THE VOTE in spite of every obstacle.

But this is not enough, we cannot ignore the burdens and difficulties under which all classes of men and women are suffering, or the inevitable waste of our national resources with the widespread economic ruin which threatens all sections of the Community. We feel that now organised women have a duty to their fellow-citizens and Country, to call for the ending of the present industrial deadlock. As a non-party organisation we cannot support any party in the struggle; but independent bodies have perhaps the best right to ask earnestly that all parties shall again get together and seek for the way out of their difficulties. "Where there's a will, there's a way." We know the obstacles are very great, but the longing everywhere for peace and a settlement fair to all sides is immeasurably greater.

The Times of May 8th published the following letter:

"A POSSIBLE CONCORDAT."

After full conference with leaders of the Christian Churches in this country, the Archbishop of Canterbury desires to make public the following expression of considered opinion:

Representatives of the Christian Churches in England are convinced that a real settlement will only be achieved in a spirit of fellowship and co-operation for the common good, and not as a result of war. Realising that the longer the present struggle persists the greater will be the suffering and loss, they earnestly request that all the parties concerned in this dispute will agree to resume negotiations undeterred by obstacles which have been created by the events of the last few days. If it should seem to be incumbent on us to suggest a definite line of approach, we would submit, as the basis of a possible Concordat, a return to the *status quo* of Friday last. We cannot but believe in the possibility of a successful issue. Our proposal should be interpreted as involving simultaneously and concurrently:

- (1) The cancellation on the part of the T.U.C. of the General Strike;
- (2) Renewal by the Government of its offer of assistance to the Coal Industry for a short definite period;
- (3) The withdrawal on the part of the mine owners of the new wages scales recently issued.

These proposals seem to us to be fair and honourable to all parties. The Women's Freedom League is therefore strongly supporting them. Our President, Hon. Treasurer, and General Secretary have, in conjunction with other women's organisations, signed a letter to this effect which has been sent to the Prime Minister, The Chairman of the Trades Union Congress General Council, and the Secretary of the Mining Association of Great Britain, and we urge all our branches, readers and members to reinforce our efforts with all their might by obtaining the utmost publicity for the above suggestions.

GOOD HOPES FOR A SETTLEMENT.

As we go to press, we rejoice to hear that the General Strike is now ending, and there seems every prospect that negotiations will at once be resumed, leading, we hope, to a speedy and lasting settlement.

LEICESTER COUNCIL, MARRIED WOMEN EMPLOYEES AND WOMEN POLICE.

Should married women surrender appointments on marriage, and should women police be appointed? were two questions debated recently by the Leicester City Council. Councillor Miss Fortey first moved that a resolution passed by the Health Committee, which had called on a woman Health Visitor to resign following her marriage, be repealed. The woman in question had been in their service seven years. On her appointment she was not told that she would be asked to resign if she married. Another Health Visitor had remained with the Committee after marriage; three other married women were at present employed by the Health Committee; and the head of her department was a married woman with two children who earned £600 a year. One male Councillor said the department was for women and children and their officers should not have distractions from outside; another felt they ought to decide once for all that the proper place for the married woman was her home; a third said it was undesirable that a Health Visitor should be a married woman and solemnly declared: "No one can serve two masters!" On a vote being taken the Mayor stated that the motion was lost.

Miss Fortey next submitted her motion that the Watch Committee be instructed to report to the Council with regard to the desirability of arranging for the appointment of women police. She felt there were certain matters which could be better undertaken by women, and needed women. There was the question of traffic control, especially where children were coming out of school. This could very well be left in the hands of police women with knowledge of first aid. Then women were particularly suitable for patrolling streets, parks, public places and for protecting young people and children in dance halls, cinemas, etc. They should also deal with women and children in all cases of any offences, whether they were the offenders or the victims. There were women magistrates, and she considered it inconsistent not to have women police. Male Councillors again disagreed with her. One of them said that the Watch Committee had debated the question of women police over and over again and had decided that there was no necessity for women to do patrol work. They did not agree with young girls being interfered with by women. Another said that even if women police were needed there was no accommodation for them at the police station: the men wanted more room, and to build another place for them would involve a capital sum of £60,000. The heads of police and Chairmen of Watch Committees were dead against women police. Another had "a rooted objection to anybody patrolling about to discover, or seeking to discover things that did not exist. The function of a police officer was to go about in the English way to see that people did right."

The motion was defeated by a large majority.

This is but one other example of the necessity for women being appointed members of Watch Committees.

WHY RAILWAY CARRIAGES SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR WOMEN.

Truth reports that a married man while on a railway journey from Mangotsfield to Bristol got into conversation with a schoolgirl, and proceeded to make himself grossly offensive. When he was before the Cheltenham magistrates his legal representative tried to palliate his offence by submitting that it would be easy to think that the young girl was older than she was. Did that make any difference? Apparently the Bench thought so, for the Chairman, who said he regarded the case as serious, proceeded to stultify his own words, by ordering the accused to pay £3 and £1 on two charges, and binding him over.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Since Tuesday, May 4th, we have not been able to obtain any Parliamentary Debates, and in any case few questions are being asked in Parliament which do not concern the General Strike. The following were asked on May 3rd:

Lunacy Law.

MR. PETHICK LAWRENCE (Lab., Leicester W.) asked the Minister of Health whether he has had his attention called to the remark of a High Court Judge on 27th April in giving judgment on a recent case, in which he pointed out the hardship created by the existing state of the law, and expressed regret at the decision he was thereby compelled to reach; and whether he contemplates the introduction of legislation to secure that in future a sane man detained in an asylum shall not be effectively prevented from bringing an action until it is too late to succeed? MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not at the moment contemplate the introduction of legislation in this matter, but the points to which the hon. Gentleman refers are receiving consideration.

Education (Defective Children).

MR. R. MORRISON (Co-op., N. Tottenham) asked the President of the Board of Education, in view of the fact that since the issue of Circular 1349, 169 local authorities have submitted proposals for making further provision for defective children, whether he will state how many of these proposals have since been deleted in the revised programmes subsequently submitted to him? LORD EUSTACE PERCY: Proposals of this nature have in a few cases been postponed to the programme period, but I have not asked any authorities to delete such proposals from their programmes.

WOMEN AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Dundee Freedom for Miss Agnes Husband.

On April 22nd Miss Agnes Husband, an old member of our League and an early member of our Executive Committee, was presented with the freedom of the City of Dundee "in recognition of the valuable services rendered by her to the community as a member of the Parish Council and the Education Authority and in many other ways over a long period of years." In a later issue of THE VOTE we hope to have a special portrait sketch of our distinguished member.

Women as Council Chairmen.

Councillor Miss Ethel Hovey has been elected Chairman of the Colwyn Bay and Colwyn Urban District Council, and is the first woman Urban Council Chairman in Wales. Miss Hovey is also Vice-Chairman of the local school managers and a governor of the Colwyn Bay Secondary School. She was for four years the Chairman of the Employment Exchange. Mrs. B. A. Chard has been elected first woman Chairman of Southall-Norwood Council. Mrs. Catherine McEntee has been elected Chairman of the Walthamstow Council.

Women Vice-Chairmen of Board of Guardians.

Mrs. Cantillon has been elected Vice-Chairman of the Cardiff Board of Guardians. The present year is her twenty-fifth continuous year of service on the Cardiff Board of Guardians, and she is the only woman member of the Assessments Committee. Miss Fulford has been elected Vice-Chairman of Fulham Board of Guardians, and Mrs. Robinson as Vice-Chairman of Shipley Board of Guardians.

Retford Woman Councillor.

At the municipal by-election in the East Ward at Retford, Mrs. Howell, wife of the Mayor, was elected. This is the first occasion on which a woman has been returned for the Retford Town Council.

Women's Freedom League

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.1.

Telegrams:—"DESPARD, MUSEUM 1429, LONDON."

Colours:—GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD.

President—Mrs. PETHICK LAWRENCE

Hon. Treasurer—Dr. E. KNIGHT.

Hon. Organising Secretary—Mrs. WHETTON.

General Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

WHERE TO GO

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

May 30th—June 6th.

Tenth I.W.S.A. Congress at the Sorbonne, Paris.

Saturday, June 19th.

Peacemakers' Pilgrimage, Great Demonstration in Hyde Park.

June 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.

British Commonwealth League Conference.

Saturday, June 26th, at 10 a.m.

National Executive Committee Meeting.

Wednesday, June 30th, at 7 p.m.

Mrs. Despard's Birthday Party, Caxton Hall.

Saturday, July 3rd.

Great Combined Equal Political Rights Procession and Hyde Park Demonstration.

PROVINCES.

Wednesday, June 16th, 3.6 p.m.

Middlesbrough Branch. Garden Party at Agecroft, Linthorpe.

SCOTLAND.

Tuesday, May 25th, at 7.45 p.m.

Edinburgh Branch. Public Meeting on "Women in the Ministry," in the Y.M.C.A. Hall.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Monday, May 17th, at 8.15 p.m.

Speech Club, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C. 1. Debate: "That Shakespeare had more insight into human nature than any other writer, ancient or modern." Proposer: Mrs. Morris-Wood.

Tuesday, June 29th, at 3 p.m.

Croydon Women Citizens' Association. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood. Subject: "Why Women's Organisations are necessary."

BRANCH NOTE.

Edinburgh.—On Tuesday, May 25th, another Public Meeting on "Women and the Ministry" will be held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall, South Street, Andrew Street, at 7.45 p.m. Dr. Norman MacLean will preside, and Dr. Katherine Chapman, Miss Eunice Murray, and Rev. Joseph Johnston (Assembly duties permitting) will speak. There may be other speakers whose names will be given later. Dr. James Black has promised to be present.

Organiser: Lilian Lenton.

WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND THE STRIKE.

The Women's Auxiliary Service organised a special Women's Emergency Corps divided into three definite sections (a) Transport, (b) Recreation and Rest Rooms for Women and Children, and (c) Special Emergency Ambulance Corps. The Six Point Group placed its office and staff of workers at the disposal of the Transport Section. The Soroptimists lent an office at Windsor House to the Transport Section. The Y.W.C.A. put a number of its Clubs at the disposal of the Women's Auxiliary Service, for use as Recreation and Rest Rooms. The Women's Legion organised a transport for hospitals, *The British Gazette*, and chemists' assistants.

POSTPONEMENTS.

The Annual Meeting of the Women's National Liberal Federation which was to have taken place this week at Kingsway Hall has been postponed till after the strike is over.

The National Conference of Labour Women which was to have been held at Huddersfield this week has been postponed until July.

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REST AND HOLIDAYS.

BRIGHTON.—"Sea View," Victoria Road. Midday dinner. Gas fires in Bedrooms. Wireless. Vegetarians catered for.—Hostess: MISS TURNER.

CORNWALL.—Paying Guests received in modern farmhouse. £2 2s week. Clotted cream 3/- lb., post free.—SELSEY, St. Stephen's, St. Austell, Cornwall.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

DANCE PIANIST and Accompanist requests engagements for Pianoforte Lessons or Accompanist.—Apply MRS. SILVESTER SPARROW, 43, Black Lion Lane, W. 6.

CHAUFFEUSE, 6 years' reference, would like a change for the South about the end of May, fond of outdoor life.—MISS WINIFRED HUMPHREYS, 128, Alton Street, Crewe.

LADIES' CYCLES (2) cheap, Pianos (3), from 4 guineas. Typewriters and Roneo Duplicator, Bargains. THREADGOLD, 41, Colville Gardens, Bayswater.

NOTICES.

INCOME TAX RECOVERED AND ADJUSTED.—Consult Miss H. M. BAKER, 275, High Holborn, W.C. 1. Income Tax Returns, Repayment Claims of all Descriptions. Telephone: Holborn 377.

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, May 16th. 3.30 Music. Lecture. 6.30. Miss MAUDE ROYDEN.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND CHAIRMANSHIP. Classes, Private Lessons and Lectures, also Saturday Speech Club. Miss LUCY BELL, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C.1.

WANTED.

WANTED.—September, in or near London, unfurnished rooms or flat by Lady, daughter training, garden, moderate.—"W.," THE VOTE Offices, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

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