

THE VOTE,
FEBRUARY 27, 1920.
ONE PENNY.

WOMEN AND HIGH PRICES.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, FEB. 27, 1920.

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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AN IMPERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Interview with Mrs. Dixon.

Readers of THE VOTE are probably aware that the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene has asked Mrs. Dixon, who has just returned from India (where she has been instrumental in obtaining the closure of tolerated brothels reserved for British troops) to undertake a campaign in Great Britain to make known the facts concerning the regulation of prostitution still continuing in a number of places under British administration. The recognition thus given to organised public prostitution encourages vice, enslaves women (who become the prey of brothel-keepers and procurers), and demoralises men.

Mrs. Dixon is prepared to address meetings all over the country on this subject, and will indicate the principle upon which steps may be taken to bring about better conditions. We urge all our members and those interested to help in the campaign by arranging meetings of local leaders, and generally by promoting the success of this effort with which the Women's Freedom League is in hearty agreement. A recent interview with Mrs. Dixon, obtained whilst she was in Manchester, will give an idea of the nature of the work which she and her husband are now so courageously engaged in pursuing.

Mrs. Dixon was living in a great rush during the short time she was in Manchester, and was just setting off to a meeting when I called. She suggested that I should accompany her to her meeting, so that we could talk on the way. I knew that my time for questions would be limited, and began at once.

"The great urgency at present," she said, "is to see that all our work to abolish the system of regulated vice among our troops in India is not undone now that the war is over. The war regulations enact that the military authorities 'may' prohibit the keeping of brothels in their cantonments. This must be altered to 'shall' prohibit the keeping of brothels, and everything possible must be done to make this permanent. Unless this is done any change of military authority may bring back the whole system."

Mrs. Dixon spoke of the uphill fight against this system of regulated vice among the troops in India. She began her campaign in the summer of 1917 by giving a series of lectures to the generals' wives in the Northern hill-stations. Then she appealed to the chaplains, but got very little help from them. It was an American Y.M.C.A. officer who finally came to the rescue and suggested that she should speak to the men themselves. This she did with the greatest success. At one hut they promised to sign a petition asking for the abolition of the system, knowing that to do so would mean imprisonment for them.

"Those who opposed our campaign," said Mrs. Dixon, "met us with the arguments with which the Association has been familiar for the last fifty years: that these houses were 'necessary for the health of the soldiers (who, meantime, sometimes contracted disease from visiting them), that 'respectable' women would not be safe without them.' It was even said that their closing would lead to a revolution amongst British troops. We knew this to be a lie, and at the request of the Y.M.C.A. my husband and I toured India, asking for help of the men in our campaign and putting the point of view of the Association before them. The Northern and Southern Army commanders gave us their support, and many official parades of both officers and men listened to our addresses.

Over 26,000 men

were addressed.

"The justice of our plea was recognised by most of those with whom we came into contact, especially when we were able to put before them our own personal investigations amongst the women. I visited 15 of the brothels set apart exclusively for British troops, and found that by employing a 'chaudri' or 'chaudran' (a man or woman caretaker of the establishment whose business it was to keep the houses supplied with a sufficient number of women) the British authorities were practically in league with procurers and traffickers in women and girls. The authorities not only sanctioned such houses, and did their best to ensure the health

of the women in them, solely for the benefit of the men who visited them, but, by deputy, they might be said to be procurers themselves. They undoubtedly encouraged the trade of prostitution.

"My experiences of the helplessness of women in segregated areas were frequently confirmed by the military police with whom I talked. They made no secret of their detestation of the whole system.

"At the end of the tour (during which I investigated the tolerated 'chaklas' and lock hospitals in Rawal Pindi, Nowshera, Peshawar, Lahore (Meean Mir), Multan, Ambala, Jubbulpore, Mhow, Ahmednagar, Kirkee, Trimulgherry, Bangalore, Lucknow, Jhansi, Jellunder and Meerut), my husband and I went up to Simla and laid the whole matter before the

Commander-in-Chief

in an interview. On July 20th, 1918, a regulation was issued under the Defence of India Act (the Indian D.O.R.A.) authorising the competent military authority to close any brothels in the Cantonments or the vicinity. In August, 1918, a memorandum was issued by the Commander-in-Chief, putting an end to the system of brothels reserved for our troops in cantonments. But the Order under the Defence of India Act lapses when Peace is ratified. It is most important that a clause should be introduced into the Cantonment Code making it compulsory upon the officials to forbid any brothels in cantonments.

"By the request of Social Service Societies in Rangoon and Singapore, I visited these two places also. The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene has already published in the *Shield* details of the appalling conditions in the segregated areas in Rangoon and Singapore. Owing to representations which have been made to the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, certain reforms are officially stated to have been carried out, but the brothel streets still remain. Singapore is even worse, and its conditions are a scandal and disgrace to the British Government.

"In both places I addressed huge and enthusiastic meetings, and we carried

unanimous resolutions

for the abolition of all recognised brothels, and a petition is being prepared in Rangoon calling upon the Governor to put the resolution into effect.

"But"—and Mrs. Dixon laid great emphasis on this—"even now this system is in use amongst our troops in the occupied parts of Germany, in Malta, Gibraltar, Egypt and Hong-Kong. From every point of view the system has been proved to be a thoroughly bad one. Medically, it is a failure, and morally it is even worse. Public opinion in this country must be roused to urge the Government to put an end to it wherever it exists. Not only are the native women of these countries exploited in the most callous and brutal manner, but the health, physical and moral, of our own boys is concerned."

At all her meetings Mrs. Dixon is moving a resolution calling upon the Government to abolish the system of regulated vice throughout the British dependencies, and her address is fittingly named "An Imperial Responsibility."

M. SACKUR.

SCARBOROUGH FREEWOMAN.—A pleasing ceremony recently took place at Scarborough Town Hall. The newly-retired Mayoress, Miss Mary Bremner Graham, who filled the post between 1913—1919, received public acknowledgment of the value of her services in the shape of five pieces of beautiful antique furniture, the remainder of the sum collected in a cheque for £67, and a polished leather bag containing half of one of our rare sovereigns, subscribed by an aged gentleman of 86. Both Miss Graham and her father, Alderman C. C. Graham, J.P., had previously received the decoration of the O.B.E. and the freedom of the Borough of Scarborough.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

Our readers will remember that there are to be four Consultative Councils to advise the Health Minister. These are to be:—

- (1) Local Government.
- (2) Insurance.
- (3) Medical.
- (4) General Health.

No. 4 has now been appointed. A majority of its members are women, and it has been asked by Dr. Addison to give him a statement of the chief improvements required in the public health services from the standpoint of the general public who will be affected by the activities of the Health Ministry. The General Health Council consists of Lady Rhondda (Chairman), Mrs. Aspinall (United Textile Factory Workers' Association), Mrs. F. Harrison Bell (Labour Party), Mrs. Burke (Women's Co-operative Guild), Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, D.Sc. (President National Council of Women), Mrs. Hood (Women's Co-operative Guild), Miss Margaret Macmillan (Labour Party), Mrs. Mayo (Dorsetshire County Council), Miss E. M. Phelps (National Association of Domestic Workers), Mrs. Pember Reeves, Lady Edmund Talbot, Miss Gertrude M. Tuckwell, J.P., Mr. Arthur Greenwood (Vice-Chairman), Councillor C. Aveling (National Chamber of Trade), Mr. George Goodenough (Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Congress), Mr. W. L. Hichens (a business man), Mr. W. Littler (Civil Service Alliance), Mr. Samuel Lord, F.S.S. (National Association of Local Government Officers), Mr. F. H. Norman (Professional Workers' Federation).

WOMEN'S PENSIONS BILL.

The Bill to provide pensions for women with children, introduced by Mr. Tyson Wilson on February 13th, came to an untimely end a week later. The Bill provided that every woman with one or more dependent children should be entitled to a pension, provided that the father was unable to support them. It included widows, wives deserted by or separated from their husbands, "unmarried wives," and the wives of husbands laid aside by illness, incapacity or invalidism. Upon re-marriage the woman lost her own proportion of the pension, but retained the children's proportion. The Local Pensions Committees were to administer the provisions, which would be carried out by women pensions officers. A woman with one child was to receive 36s. 8d. per week, with 7s. 6d. for the second child, and a further 6s. for each additional child, the pensions to be paid by the Treasury.

The Speaker ruled the Bill out of order on the ground that it involved a charge on the Exchequer, and should have originated in Committee of the whole House.

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WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A Change of Plans.

The news that the Spanish Committee of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance has been unable to secure permission for the use of the Grand Opera House in Madrid, the only hall adequate for the purpose, must be particularly trying for the organisers who have been busily making arrangements for the forthcoming Conference, not to mention the damping of the enthusiasm of the numbers of delegates who had intended being present. According to Miss Chrystal Macmillan, the Recording Secretary, it has been represented in Spain that the Alliance is a body of persons masquerading under a false pretence but whose real object is to work against the Catholic Church. This misrepresentation has apparently gained credence in high ecclesiastical circles in Spain, and has even been used to mislead those in very responsible political and religious positions in this country. As a matter of fact, there are many Catholic women in the affiliated associations of the Alliance, whilst a large body of devout and orthodox Catholic women in Spain are in favour of women's suffrage, and are working actively for it under the leadership of the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo. The Conference will probably assemble in Geneva the first week in June. Switzerland is more generally accessible than Spain, and the change of place will probably enable larger numbers of women to be present. Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, Ludgate Circus, will supply all information regarding travel arrangements. The *Manchester Guardian* reports that the Greek Women's Society has just applied for affiliation to the Alliance, and it is hoped that for the first time Greek delegates will be at the Conference.

A Notable Exhibition.

The Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia closes this week. During the three weeks in which it has been open to the public it has been visited by hundreds of thousands of spectators, ranging from Royalty to charwomen. The model houses were probably the chief features of interest to most people—especially those who happened to be homeless at the time—whilst the choice of materials other than brick, and the speed with which many of the houses had been constructed no doubt provided sources of comment for the enviously inclined. The numerous labour-saving devices exhibited in all parts of the building have also excited much interest and attention, and it will not be the fault of a houseless and servantless community if the splendid object-lessons of the Olympia Exhibition are not immediately translated into practice.

The All-Electric House.

Perhaps one of the most attractive features of the Exhibition has been the all-electric house. To the modern housewife this wonderful little residence must appear like a dream. You turn on a switch and your bath is heated, your food cooked, and your room warmed in winter or fanned in summer; there are electrical appliances for washing dishes, for working the vacuum cleaner and the sewing machine, for ironing, for a hot-air device for waving your hair, and another appliance for lighting your cigar, and so on. Although electricity is now thoroughly at the service of the community, and will be available for all the new housing schemes before the country, it is still too dear at the moment for the everyday use of all but the wealthy classes. Mr. Hirst, the manager of the General Electric Co., however, in a special display at Olympia last week, expressed himself as confident that electric service, which now costs £1, would in the near future be reduced to 1s.

Russian Woman Ambassador.

Jus Suffragi reports that Madame Angelica Balabanoff has been selected as the Russian diplomatic representative for Rome. Madame Balabanoff was exiled from Russia, and spent many years in Italy. Latterly she returned to Russia.

Woman Wireless Operator.

According to the *Manchester Guardian*, Miss A. C. Rainie has the honour of being the first woman wireless operator in Great Britain. She took her certificate from the North British Wireless School in Glasgow, and was on duty in nearly every air raid "somewhere in London." She picked up the Armistice message at 5.30 a.m. on November 11th, 1918, and later relinquished her work to demobilised men from Dunkirk. A trying experience of hers was one night when she was taking a message from a ship at sea, and rats were gnawing round her tower. The gnawing disturbed her more than the raids. She found that Monday mornings were good days to receive messages, and came to the conclusion that ether needs a seventh day of rest like workmen's tools and human beings. The still hours of the night were also excellent for taking long-distance messages. Miss Rainie has spoken through wireless waves to air pilots, and heard their voices distinctly. Once an airman recited Kipling's "If" back to her by telephony. Her most exciting message was an S.O.S. call from a steamer foundering off the south coast of Ireland.

The Girl behind the Dockers.

Miss Mae Forcey, to whom Mr. Bevin has given full credit for drafting his brief and preparing the notes of the fourteen hours' speech in which he so ably presented the dockers' case before the Commission, is quite a young woman, who, until about a year ago, knew nothing of the Labour movement or its personalities and problems. For years she had been concerned with theatrical matters, and had more than once been sent over to America to discover vaudeville stars who were likely to please English audiences. Before last general election she became secretary to Mr. Ben Tillett, and is now on the staff at the Dock Workers' Union headquarters. Miss Forcey had only a fortnight's notice to help Mr. Bevin to get up his case.

Ex-Soldiers or Women?

The Denbighshire Education Committee at Chester last week discussed the question of appointing two physical instructors for the county schools. Four applicants attended, two ex-soldiers and two women, both the former having been Army instructors. The members were in favour of appointing one woman instructor and one man, but the Director of Education pointed out that men could not be employed to teach girls physical exercises, although women could teach boys. In view of this fact the Committee finally decided to appoint both the women.

Women Suffrage in Japan.

An Electoral Reform Bill which would grant the vote to Japanese women is now being considered in Japan. The question of women's suffrage in Japan is very much to the fore just now, and though at the last session of the Diet the President, Viscount Kato, declared the time for universal suffrage had not arrived, he is now reported to have changed his mind on the subject, and says that if a majority of the Diet wishes to present such a Bill there is no reason why the Government party should oppose it.

Votes for Greek Women.

A petition has been presented in the Greek Chamber from the Lyceum (Women's) Club for equality of civil rights. M. Venizelos replied with barren sympathy, and the demand that the majority of Greek women must ask for their rights, and prove that they wanted them, and when the time was ripe the Government would yield.

THE FEMINIST LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27th, 1920.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—

Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.

Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

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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WOMEN AND HIGH PRICES.

It is time that women made a national protest against the ever-increasing prices of necessities, for it is upon the women of the country that the burden of these high prices weighs most heavily. Women have to spend the money for the family on food and most of the necessities of life; and women have to provide the cotton (now rod, a reel) and the wool for the mending (and often the making) of the clothes, as well as the darning for the family. The price of butter is becoming prohibitive, and it is stated that there will be a smaller ration per head of sugar this year, as well as a smaller quantity for making jam. At the same time, housewives can see that there is apparently no stint in the sugar allowance to manufacturers for the making of jam, or to the confectioners or to sweet manufacturers. Women in every constituency should unite in sending a deputation to their Member of Parliament to protest strongly against this scandal, and make him realise that, unless he does something effective in the way of compelling the Government to find some means of bringing down these prices, he need not expect to receive the votes of women when he next appeals for their suffrages. Moreover, these same women would render good service to the community if they steadily refused to purchase anything beyond the bare necessities of life until there was a considerable decrease in the prices of all commodities. If women of all classes would organise and persist in their refusal to support this insane upward tendency of prices they would be bound to fall. Many women would be in the position to boycott all perishable goods, then, we feel convinced, it would not be long before the present prices of meat, fish, fruit and vegetables would be considerably reduced. These high prices are a conspiracy against the State, and should be fought on that basis. Last Monday Mr. Lambert asked if the Government would give time for a discussion in the House of Commons on this question, but Mr. Bonar Law treated the matter unsympathetically, stating that there was no Government time to spare for such a discussion. He suggested that some of the time allocated to private Members' motions might be allocated for this purpose. A Government supporter, Mr. Percy Hurd, recommended that this (Friday) afternoon might be appropriated for it. As our readers know, Mr. Grundy is to-day to bring in a Bill to amend the Representation of the People Act, which will almost certainly contain an Equal Franchise Clause for men and women. We know well the Government's antipathy to such a clause, but if it succeeds in shelving this Bill we can assure the Government that not only is it true, as Mr. Pemberton Billing asserts, "that as the prices of commodities go up the value of the Coalition coupon goes down," but that the Coalition coupon will be worse than useless amongst women if they realise that the Government is prepared to resort to this sort of trickery to perpetuate the disfranchisement of women.

WOMEN AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The Joint Committee appointed to consider the re-organisation of the Civil Service has issued its report, and recommends:—

Equal minimum pay, status and authority for men and women in parallel classes.

Full opportunities for women in the higher administrative duties.

Promotion on fitness from lower to higher classes.

An Efficiency Bar.

This Committee expresses the opinion that "the principles of training and of promotion recommended for men should be applied equally to the parallel women classes, and that, as regards pay, the minimum of the basic scale in each class should be the same for women and for men, and that the incremental rates should be identical up to a point."

The last four words are significant, for we learn that salary for males is £60 on entry to maximum of £250 (attainable at age of 36); but for females it is £60 on entry, to maximum of £180 at age of 34.

The Committee proposes to set up an efficiency bar in both scales at £180 and £135 a year respectively, but it also recommends a higher grade of the clerical class with salaries of £300 to £400 for men and £230 to £300 for women. The Committee contemplates that a considerable proportion of Executive class posts will be filled by promotion from the clerical class, and the salaries proposed are: Men, £400 to £500; women, £300 to £400.

We do not agree that the findings of this report satisfy women's demands for equal pay with men for similar duties; and we hope that women employed in the Civil Service will not rest until this sex differentiation in salary is abolished in all employment under Government.

THE AGE OF CONSENT.

The "Bishop of London's Bill," the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1920, is expected to be submitted this session to the House of Lords, and a resolution of approval of the Bill has been passed by the Upper House of Convocation. The Bill raises the age of consent for indecent assault to 16 for both boys and girls, and for criminal assault to 18 for girls, and the latter is made absolute. The limit of time for institution of proceedings is to be twelve months after the offence. An age of consent is set up for boys; a woman of 18 or over convicted of criminal assault against a boy under the age of 17 is liable to imprisonment for two years, with or without hard labour. Penalties on persons convicted of keeping disorderly houses are increased, the fines to £100, £250 and £500, and the terms of imprisonment to three, six and twelve months respectively, for a first, second and third conviction, with or without hard labour, and both fine and imprisonment may be imposed.

The raising of the age of consent is a very pressing and long-overdue reform which has always been demanded by us. The women's position to-day as a vital part of the political machine ought to be strong enough to push it through, and we must all determine to see this Bill become law. Boys ought, of course, to be protected as well as girls. Heavy penalties for the profiteers in immorality, though just in themselves, are not always so helpful as one would wish, for they are easily evaded, and it is to a well-informed local public opinion, and to enlightened and wide-awake local Councils and Watch Committees, with abundant women representatives, that we must look to make the trade in immorality unprofitable. When the Bill comes forward in Parliament we shall be ready to support it heartily, and to negative any attempts to pitchfork into it those noxious amendments which may be in contemplation.

SATELLITE TOWNS.

A SOLUTION OF THE PRESENT CONGESTION.

Satellite Towns for Greater London was the subject of a Conference organised by the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, and held last Saturday afternoon at the Ideal Home Exhibition. Over 500 delegates were present, representing the London County Council and all the Local Authorities for London and the Home Counties, various political parties, trades unions, as well as associations and individuals interested in civic improvement. Mr. Kennedy Jones, M.P., Chairman of London Traffic Advisory Committee, presided. Mr. Herbert Morrison (Secretary, London Labour Party) dealt with Satellite Towns as a remedy for transit and housing from the Labour point of view, and Captain R. L. Reiss (member of the Housing Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health) reviewed the problem of Housing, Transport and Industry in Greater London and the failure of suburban development.

Put very briefly the case for New Towns was stated as follows: During the nineteenth century the population of Greater London increased from

1½ million to 7 million,

and of late years there has been a decrease of population in the city itself, accompanied by an increase of residents on the outskirts of London, which threatens to spread all over the Home Counties, turning the countryside into a vast dormitory, and increasing to breaking point the difficulties of transit for all classes of the community.

Satellite Towns were described as self-contained garden cities which would follow the example of Letchworth. These cities would be established round London, but sufficiently far away to ensure the preservation of a belt of open country round the mother town. These cities would be carefully planned, limited in size, and in their turn surrounded by an agricultural belt. They would contain factories (there are now 40 factories at Letchworth), businesses of all kinds, good shops, schools and places of amusement; the housing of the workers would have an opportunity of starting fresh and being carried out on the best lines, and agriculture would flourish in close proximity to the town. The advantages urged in favour of Satellite Towns for Greater London were many: men and women would live near their work and would save that one to two hours of valuable time and energy now wasted in crowded railway carriages; an outlet would be provided for surplus London factories, and the number of these latter could be limited; slum areas could be cleared and need not be rebuilt; gardens and the usefulness and joy of gardening would be a common possession; health would improve and

the rate of infant mortality

would fall (this rate for Shoreditch is 165 per 1,000, and for Letchworth 30). In fact, this proposal seeks to eliminate from urban life its dullness and lack of progression and to combine in a garden city the pleasures and advantages of country and town.

In the second session of the Conference Mr. C. B. Purdan (Secretary of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association) dealt with the technical side of the subject, and the Local Government problems involved in the creation of Satellite Towns—problems which can be overcome by united effort.

Sir Theodore Chambers, K.B.E., F.S.I., gave an interesting account of London's First Satellite Town—the garden city at Welwyn, Herts. Letchworth owes its existence to the inspiration and untiring effort of Mr. Ebenezer Howard; so also it is due to Mr. Howard that a large estate has been bought at Welwyn and that a company has been formed to develop the estate as a Satellite Town.

All the speakers were agreed in this—that if the Housing and Transit problems of London are to find a

satisfactory solution this can only be effected under the direction of one central authority. London is now growing, and growing very rapidly, as it pleases and how it pleases, without limitation and without control; over 100 different Local Authorities each supervise their own little bit to its own personal advantage as they think. It is the business of no one to recognise the greatness and grandeur of London as a whole, with its problems which affect the whole, and with also its wonderful possibilities for ideal development. The present housing and town planning campaign was spoken of as a new war: let it be remembered the last war was only brought to a close when individual interests were merged under one supreme command.

E. A. BROWNING.

[Further information upon this very vital subject may be obtained from the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, 3, Gray's Inn Place, W.C. 1.]

THE WORKING WOMAN'S HOUSE.

"The Working Woman's House"* is a noteworthy and exceedingly useful contribution to the mass of literature now being issued on the Housing problem. It is eminently practical from the point of view of the woman of the working and lower middle class, on whom the difficulty is pressing so heavily. Sections of it ought to be in the hands of every Housing Committee in the country with the instructions; nothing less will suffice. The argument for wide and shallow staircases, ample cupboard accommodation, properly constructed bedrooms, sensible planning of the living room and the necessity for that much-debated room—the parlour—is unequalled.

When the book deals with labour-saving appliances and communal kitchens, it is not so satisfactory. After a visit to the Ideal Home Exhibition, where you see the desirable substitutes for the old-fashioned dresser, the innumerable helps, washing-up, washing, cleaning and cooking priced far beyond what a working woman can hope to attain in a lifetime (as one woman pithily put it: "Them that don't require can have; them that needs must go without"). It is not much help to be told "not to despair because of their costliness." Nothing will cheapen them so effectually as to bring them into common use.

Some other method of easing the tremendous amount of labour in cooking and the necessary preparing, clearing and washing-up must be evolved than that advocated by the writers. Restaurant prices even on the cheap scale quoted in the book from the National and other restaurants—an average of 1s. per head for lunch—can only represent the special holiday jaunt, and not an every and all day occurrence for the woman with a family and very limited income. After deducting what must be spent on rent, insurance, club, boots, etc., the amount per individual meal when, say, in a family of four children and two adults, 168 meals have to be provided per week, the impracticability for a family is demonstrated, though it may meet the needs of the individual city wage-earner.

The aspects already referred to and the chapters on laundry, home-helps, town planning and Ministry of Health regulations all contribute to making the Working Woman's House of the greatest value to everyone who has even the slightest interest in the subject.

*By A. D. Sanderson Furniss and Marion Phillips. (Swarthmore Press.) 1s. 6d. (Can be obtained at this office.)

ANNA MUNRO.

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IN PARLIAMENT.

Women Employment by Army Authorities.

In reply to a question asked by VISCOUNT CURZON in the House of Commons, SIR ARCHIBALD WILLIAMSON stated that there are at present 284 members of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps in the United Kingdom. They are employed at the headquarters of the Corps and at the Records Office on clerical work in connection with the Corps. There are 65 employed overseas on work connected with graves' registration. In addition there are 413 women motor drivers, 889 employed in mechanical transport depôts, etc.

Women Magistrates.

MR. CLOUGH asked the Home Secretary whether, in view of the number of women and children who come before the Courts, he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation to provide for the appointment of at least one woman magistrate on every Bench in the United Kingdom?

MR. SHORTT replied: "The Lord Chancellor has taken active steps for selecting women for appointment as magistrates throughout the country, and no legislation beyond the recent Sex Disqualification Removal Act is required."

The Home Secretary gave no answer to MR. CLOUGH's further enquiry as to whether the suggestion put forward in his question had MR. SHORTT's sympathy and support.

Census Bill.

In reply to a question asked by MR. GILBERT, DR. ADDISON said that a Bill for taking the Census in 1921 will be introduced at an early date. We should think that the Census of 1921 is more likely to be accurate than the one taken some years ago, when so many women, acting on the principle "No vote, no count," declined to be enrolled.

Maternity Homes.

In reply to a question asked by MR. CLOUGH, DR. ADDISON said: "The Local Government Board and the Ministry of Health have for some time pressed upon local authorities, both in general circulars and in individual letters, the importance of the provision and maintenance of maternity homes, and have obtained Treasury sanction for a grant of half the approved expenditure on these purposes. During the last year or so about 25 such homes were established by municipal authorities, and about 20 by voluntary bodies, who, as a rule, received financial assistance from local authorities. Many similar homes have been planned, and are likely to be established in the near future."

Women Police.

In reply to a question asked by MAJOR LLOYD-GRAEME, MR. SHORTT said that since the passing of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act he had not issued any new instructions to Chief Constables in England and Wales cancelling the instructions previously given that women cannot be sworn in as constables. The question of the status and duties of women appointed to assist the police will be considered by a Parliamentary Committee.

Housing.

In the debate on "Housing" last week MAJOR LLOYD-GRAEME said: "I want to be sure that women are being brought into the Government scheme. It is essential, if we are to get practical results at a cheap price. I am perfectly certain that there is no Member of the Government who would dare to build a house, or even to take a furnished house, without taking his wife into consultation. If the Minister denies that, he is either unmarried or—"

The Minister of Health (DR. ADDISON): I did not deny it. MAJOR LLOYD-GRAEME: "I do hope that in this big national problem women are being brought in, because I am quite sure that they know the practical things that are wanted in houses. I want to be sure that they are there to see that the practical and necessary things are insisted upon and that the other things are allowed to go by the board."

Our friends in the Hendon constituency are to be congratulated on their rapid education of Major Lloyd-Graeme.

Separation Allowance.

MR. MACQUISTEN asked the Secretary of State for War why the wife of a soldier who enlisted on October 13th, 1919, for six years with the colours and six years with the reserve has been refused any separation allowance for the support of herself and the infant child of the marriage.

SIR A. WILLIAMSON replied that the regulations under which this man enlisted provided that separation allowance would not be issuable unless and until he was admitted to the married establishment. The soldier, on enlistment, signed a form acknowledging that he fully realised the terms of his engagement in this respect. He further stated that he was a single man.

We quite believe that the man made these statements; he would probably do so in order to get rid of the responsibility for supporting his wife and child. What we want to know is—does the War Office condone this offence? If not, this man should at once be sent back to civil life and made to realise his responsibilities. Or the amount of the separation allowance might be stopped from his pay and forwarded to his wife.

Teachers Salaries.

MR. CHADWICK asked the President of the Board of Education if the House will have the opportunity of discussing the findings of the Burnham Committee; and whether he will, in the case of the teachers, submit to the vote of the House the principle of equal pay for men and women teachers of the same professional status.

MR. FISHER: I imagine that a discussion of the effect of the adoption of the scales of salaries recommended by the Burnham Committee, and of the relation of the pay of men and women teachers would be relevant to the Board's Estimates, and there are other ways in which the latter issue can be raised. I am not prepared to take the course suggested.

We think that a debate in the House of Commons on the principle of equal pay for men and women of the same professional status would make very interesting reading, and we should certainly like to see the results of a division on this question. Would the Government put on their Whips? We wonder!

F. A. U.

A HOMELESS BABY.

At the Manchester Assizes, Mary O'Gara (22), a cardroom worker, was convicted of the murder of her child, aged eight months. On December 22nd the baby was ill, and was taken into the Ashton Union Hospital for three weeks. On January 10th the mother was told by the relieving officer that the baby had recovered and must be taken away that afternoon. An alternative was offered her to go herself into the workhouse, when the baby would be transferred into the Union nursery. She took the child away and put it into the canal and tried to drown herself, but was prevented. This girl had been left an orphan at 14, and had brought herself up. She had no home to which to take the child, and could not face an indeterminate sentence of workhouse imprisonment where she would not even have had the baby with her. The Jury strongly recommended her to mercy, and considered it a great pity that the child had to be removed from the workhouse when the mother had nowhere to take it. The workhouse, of course, was acting legally, but the duty of Guardians of the poor is better interpreted by those Boards which illegally do keep babies under these circumstances. To send a desperate young girl away with a helpless infant and nowhere to take it is an incitement to murder. Sacred infant life is a stock phrase at Assizes and the like, but the law which refuses to help a wretched young mother in performing a task beyond her powers, and then passes sentence of death upon her for failure is contemptible and shameful.

Society is responsible for these young girls; they have a right to a life that is bearable; they have a right to the shelter of a roof whilst they work to support themselves and their little ones. From the many cases of this kind which find their way into the Press it is evident that private endeavours and the exertions of the girls are totally inadequate, and some public provision must be made for those cases which require it. Imprisonment in a workhouse has nothing to recommend it, but many girls would be saved from despair, and their babies from death, by the establishment of small municipal hostels which they would have the right to enter, and where they might make a home in time of need.

MODEL ELECTION AT CLAPHAM.

On Thursday, February 19th, a Model Election, held at the Belmont Hall, Clapham, attracted a large audience. Five candidates had been nominated, and of these three were to be elected. The order of speaking was decided by lot, the first speaker being Mrs. J. E. Cliffe (Independent); then followed Miss F. A. Underwood (Liberal), Mr. J. H. Bottomley (Conservative), and Mrs. Samuel (Labour). The Teacher candidate, Miss E. E. Froud, started for the Hall, but was, unfortunately, prevented by an accident from arriving. A member of the audience briefly explained Miss Froud's point of view, and it was decided that her name should remain on the ballot paper. Each candidate was allowed five minutes for her speech and three minutes for answering questions. The audience did not make use of its privilege of "heckling" the first speaker, but the later candidates were assailed by numerous questions. All the speeches being over, the count was taken by Miss Morton, an official of the Proportional Representation Society, who also explained the method of working the P.R. system. The elected candidates were Mrs. Samuel, Miss Underwood, and Miss Froud. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Tanner for her able chairmanship and also for addressing the meeting on "The Needs of Women M.P.'s."

THE WOMAN HEALTH MINISTER.

Now that there are rumours of the impending transference of Dr. Addison from the position of Minister of Health to another Ministerial appointment, the Women's Freedom League again presses for the Woman Health Minister which we have always demanded. It is an absurdity that with six or seven million women voters the Cabinet should consist of men only, and there are a number of women who would very suitably fill this responsible post.

Women's Freedom League.

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



DARE TO BE FREE

Subject: "Our British Soviet System." Chair: Mrs. Keevil Rickford. 3 p.m.

Monday, March 8.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Speaker: Mr. W. L. George. Subject: "Women Under Socialism." Chair: Miss Pierotti. 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 10.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Miss Jessie March. Subject: "The Unmarried Mother." Chair: Dr. Patch. 3 p.m.

Thursday, March 18.—Political Sub-Committee, 144, High Holborn, 12 o'clock.

Friday, March 19.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café. Speaker: Miss Rebecca West. Subject: "Women and Crime." 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 20.—National Executive Committee, 144, High Holborn. 10 a.m.

Wednesday, March 24.—Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Speaker: Miss Haslett (Secretary, Women's Engineering Society). Subject: "Women and Engineering." 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 24.—Women's Freedom League Annual Conference, Council Chamber, Caxton Hall, Westminster. 10 a.m.

PROVINCES.

Monday, March 1.—Bexhill. Public Meeting, Kahveh Café. "What the Women's Freedom League Stands For." 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 3.—Middlesbrough. Whist Drive and Social. Suffrage Café. 7.30 prompt. Light refreshments.

Monday, March 8.—Westcliff. Labour Hall, 6, Broadway Market. 7.30. Speaker: Mr. H. H. Elvin. Subject: "Ireland."

Wednesday, March 17.—Portsmouth. Public Meeting, 2, Kent Road. Speaker: Miss Prewett. Subject: "Woman—Past, Present, and Future." 3.15 p.m.

WALES.

Thursday, March 4.—Scala Theatre, Newtown. "At-Home." 3—6.30 p.m. Subject: "Women in India." Speakers: Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Alix M. Clark. Chair: Major David Davies, M.P. Music, Tea.

Friday, March 5.—Town Hall, Llanfyllin. "At-Home." 3—6.30 p.m. Subject: "Women in India." Speakers: Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Alix M. Clark. Chair: Major David Davies, M.P. Tea, Music.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Monday, March 29.—Redcar. Mrs. Schofield Coates will address Women's Section of Labour Party on "Mothers' Pensions." 3 p.m.

Wednesday, March 31.—Thornaby-on-Tees. Mrs. Schofield Coates will address Women's Section of Labour Party, on "Mothers' Pensions." 3 p.m.

THE MINERVA CLUB.

The Club represents a new activity of the Freedom League. It stands for the same principles, and affords recreation and social intercourse for those professing them. It purposes to supply a common meeting ground for men and women interested in progressive thought and social reform. It intends to stimulate that thought by means of debates and discussions. Here, however, will be no merely high-brow gatherings—the lighter side of life will be cultivated also. The annual subscription is £1 1s.; entrance fee 10s. 6d., which will not, however, be charged to the first 50 applicants. The rules are now being formulated, and may be obtained, together with all other particulars, on application to the Hon. Secretary, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C. 1.

BRANCH NOTES.

MANCHESTER.

On Tuesday, February 17th, we held our Annual Branch Meetings at the Milton Hall, Deansgate. Reports on the year's work were read by the Organiser, Secretary and Treasurer. There was some discussion on the branch finances and the necessity of further extending our membership in order to be able to do more propaganda in Manchester. Miss Neal was elected Chairman of the Branch, and our Secretary and Treasurer kindly consented to remain in office another year. Three new members of Committee were elected—Mrs. Ellison, Miss Greenwood, and Miss Griffiths. Miss Horden and Miss Parry were chosen to act as delegates from the W.F.L. to the Conference which is being arranged by the Women's International League on March 13th, on "The Position of Women in Industry and the Home"; Mrs. Baker and Miss Greenwood to act as delegates to a Conference arranged by the Women Citizens on March 1st to discuss the question of "Women Police in Manchester." Resolutions for the Conference were then discussed. One or two of our members are anxious to have a small "Cake and Apron Sale" in a few weeks, and a sub-committee was formed to arrange it. Next Monday our Study Circle meets to read and discuss "Some Problems of Reconstruction," a series of lectures given at the Swarthmore Summer School in 1917, and edited by Lucy Gardner. Organiser—Miss M. SACKUR, 149, Plymouth Grove, C.-on-M., Manchester.

PORTSMOUTH.

Mrs. Kingswell, who has been a member of the Portsmouth Board of Guardians for 25 years, was the speaker at the monthly public meeting on Wednesday afternoon, February 18th. She dealt very ably with her subject, "The Problem of the Unmarried Mother," and explained the Bill brought forward by the National Council of the Unmarried Mother and her Child, to amend the Bastardy Acts. Miss Maynard, who presided, said the question must be treated not from a sentimental but from a human point of view. An animated discussion followed. Next month Miss Frances Prewett will speak on "Woman—Past, Present, and Future."

Hon. Sec.—MRS. WHETTON, 89, Festing Grove, Southsea.

LETCHWORTH.

Two meetings were held last Wednesday, under the auspices of the Women's Freedom League. Mrs. Nevinson was the speaker. Her subject at the Skittles in the afternoon was fully dealt with—"Woman Under the Law." She especially emphasised the crying need for women's work and influence to be exercised on all public bodies, on the Houses of Parliament, as national, but international. She referred to the recent Albert Hall meeting, attended by twelve thousand women, who assembled to further and support the League of Nations.—At the Howard Hall, Mrs. Nevinson again spoke on the aims and objects of the Women's Freedom League. This meeting was followed by a social and dance for young people. The promoters are very desirous that our young women shall read and think on the great subjects of woman's emancipation and work for the emancipation of the vote and the world's need at this time of chaos and confusion—and shall, through knowledge, get through much that is empty and frivolous, into deeper water, and realise their highest womanhood.

WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA.

Some members of this branch are taking an active part in the Southend Local Parliament. Until quite recently a Liberal Government was in power; but it was defeated on its Trades Disputes Bill, and was succeeded by a Conservative Government. A woman has been appointed President of the Board of Education (Mrs. Watts), and she has had a good deal of practical experience in educational matters. A woman (Mrs. Cohen) also had the honour of moving that an address embodying the terms of His Majesty's most gracious speech as presented and read to the House be adopted, and everyone present agreed that she made an admirable speech on that occasion. The King's Speech, however, contained no reference to women's interests, so we are not surprised to learn that at the next meeting of this Parliament Mrs. Alexandra, a Labour member, will move an amendment in which the House "regrets that no reference is made in His Majesty's Speech to the position of women under the Law of the Land, and demands that steps be taken immediately to remove all sex disqualifications, and to insure that there shall be full equality of citizenship of both sexes." This amendment will be seconded by Mrs. Elvin, the President of our local branch, and supported by Miss Burness, its Hon. Treasurer.

Last Monday evening the branch held a very successful meeting at the Labour Hall, Southend. Mrs. Newbury presided, and Miss F. A. Underwood spoke on "The Political Work of the Women's Freedom League," after which there was a very animated discussion.

The Women's Freedom League Settlement,

93, NINE ELMS LANE, LONDON, S.W. 8.

We have to acknowledge with much gratitude clothes from Mrs. Briggs, a nice mixed bundle of jumble goods per Mrs. Delbanco, also a box of the same from Mrs. Bell Lloyd, £1 1s. from the Mayor of Battersea, 2s. 6d. Miss Sally Bergmann, £1 Mrs. Cavendish-Bentick.

FRIDAY,
FEB. 27,
1920.

THE VOTE

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WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

WORK OF THE PENAL REFORM LEAGUE.

In a particularly interesting and instructive address given last Wednesday at the Minerva Café, Miss Neville attributed the apathy of the public with regard to our present prison system to the old adage—"Out of sight, out of mind." The function of imprisonment was twofold: (1) To provide security to the State and to the individual against those who would prey upon them. (2) To act as a deterrent to those who have no desire for righteousness. To these two aims the Penal Reform League suggested a third—that of reformation of the offender, so that people should leave prison more fit than when they came there.

There were ameliorations in our modern prison system compared to a century ago. Before 1840 the penalties inflicted included mutilation, stocks, banishment, flogging, death. The last two only remained, with the addition of fines and imprisonment. But the bad effect of prison life, even as now constituted, was sufficiently evident (especially upon educated people) by books such as Mr. Stephen Hobbhouse's "Prison Life from Within" (Allen and Unwin).

Prison life would never be altered so long as its administration was entirely in the hands of Prison Commissioners working under the Home Secretary. These settle all the rules, appoint and dismiss all the officers, inspectors, medical men, chaplains and warders. They acknowledge no outside authority and no superior, except the Home Secretary. Reforms suggested by the Penal Reform League included: (1) Letting in the fresh air of publicity by linking up prison life with the local authorities outside; putting prison education under the auspices of the Board of Education; the medical officers under the Ministry of Health; the chaplain under the bishop of the diocese; and the prison commissioners to have an Advisory Board formed from outside, this to include at least one woman. (2) Changing the life within the prison. The present solitary confinement in cells, coupled with labour under

servile conditions, and the ordinary prison tradition, tended to destroy self-respect, and to make its victims feel they were utterly worthless. The lowering and unappetising diet, too, undermined the vitality and moral stability, and might, at least, be made nourishing. The Penal Reform League had drafted a Bill advocating these reforms, which it was hoped would be dealt with in the present session.

An interesting discussion at the close of the address was opened by Councillor Margaret Hodge, who presided, and who pointed out that one-third of our criminals were mentally defective, and that many persons became anti-social in consequence of wrongful or excessive punishment.

THE FOUNDATIONS of FEMINISM.

Miss Abadam's Course of Lectures on the above subject (see advt.) at 25, Wimpole Street, W., during March and April, will include the following subjects:—

The New Era. The Ascending Arc. Reversal of accepted Ideas. Need of Feminist Solidarity. Revision of Human Values. Damaged Psychology. Woman's Biological Charter. Doctrine of Correspondence. Ariadne's Thread. Virgin Mothers of Science. Double Polarity. Essential Power, Scriptures and their Translators. Supplanting Pronoun. Mother in Early Christian Trinity. The Priestesses of the Dove. The Mighty from their Seat. Field of Hemp: End of Duality. Phaëton. Feminist Content of Ancient Allegories and Symbols. Demeter. Persephone. Vesta's Fire. Creative Ether. Una and the Lion. Parthenon. Kabbalah and Secret Societies. Safe and Unsafe Intellectuality. Pilate's Wife. Male Control of Industries. Serfdom. Right of Choice of Work. Tree of Knowledge. Tree of Life. Eva and Ave. Perishing by Serpents. What Type of Woman Crushes the Serpent's Head? Budding of the Fig Tree. Rosa Mystica. (Charts and Illustrations.)

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