

VOL. XVI. No. 389. (Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper and transmissible through the post in the United Kingdom at the newspaper rate of postage, but to Canada FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1917 and Newsfoundland at the Magazine rate.)

Edited by C. DESPARD.

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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WHERE WE STAND.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO WOMAN SUFFRAGE AND THE FRANCHISE REFORM BILL.

In reply to the Woman Suffrage Deputation which he received at 10, Downing Street on Thursday afternoon, March 29, the Prime Minister amplified his statement in the House of Commons on the previous day with regard to the position of Woman Suffrage and the coming Franchise Reform Bill. Extracts from his speech are on another page; his own summing-up of his answers to the questions put to him was as follows :--

WOMAN SUFFRAGE MUST BE IN THE BILL.

The first question is : Are we going to proceed at once ?

Instructions were given this morning for the preparation of the Bill; in fact, that was the first thing I did after receiving the mandate of the House of Commons.

The second question is : What will happen about Woman Suffrage ? Will it be in the Bill ?

It is bound to be in the Bill, because the Speaker has already ruled that you cannot move it in as an amendment, and therefore, unless you put it in the Bill, there will be no chance of voting upon it, and it is essential even from the drafting point of view that it shall be in because we cannot have a repetition of the disaster that happened before, and I say that after consultation with Mr. Speaker last night.

The third point is: What about Government Whips?

It is not yet determined what the arrangement will be about whipping, because we want the House of Commons to feel that it is not so much a Government Bill as a Bill agreed upon by the House itself through the agency of its presiding Member, the Speaker.

Answering a further question from Mrs. Fawcett as to whether the Women's Suffrage clause will be treated with regard to Whips just in the same way as the other parts of the Bill ?

Mr. Lloyd George said: We have not considered the question of Whips at all, and therefore it would not be fair for me to give an answer to that at the present moment. Should any Member of the Government differ from his colleagues, that Member will be free to record his vote on this question. I am not aware of a single Member of the House of Commons who will desire to differ from his colleagues in that respect.

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Women's Freedom League.

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C. I. Telegroms-"DESPARD, MUSEUM 1429, LONDOM." Telegrome-MUSEUM 1429. Colours-GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD. President-Miss. C. DESPARD. Hon. Treasurer-Dz. E. KNIGHT. Hon. Organising Scoretary-Miss EUNICE MURRAY. Hon. Head of 'Vote'' Street Sales Department-Miss ALIX M. CLARK. How ded Livering Denartment-Miss MARGARET HODGE. CLARK. Hon. Head of Literature Department-MISS MARGARET HODGE. Political and Militant Organiser-MISS C. NINA BOYLE. Secretary-MISS F. A. UNDERWOOD.

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VATES FOR WONEN FOR WONEN E DARE TO BE FREE. 7 p.m. Speaker: Miss Abadam. PROVINCES. WATES WE AND A COMPARISON OF A COMPARISON OF A COMPARIMENT OF A COMPARISON OF A COMPARISO

PROVINCES. Wednesday, April 25.—Middlesbrough. Great Suffrage Demonstration, Town Hall, 7 p.m. Speakers to be announced. Friday, April 27.—Swansea. Jumble Sale, Ragged Schools,

6.30 p.m OTHER SOCIETIES.

Sunday, April 22.-Kingston Humanitarian Society Meet-ing, Fife Hall, Fife-road, 7 p.m. Speaker : Mrs. Tanner.

W.F.L. LETTER TO MR. ASQUITH.

The following letter has been sent by the Women's Freedom League to Mr. Asquith:---RIGHT HON. H. H. ASQUITH, M.P.,

House of Commons, S.W. DEAR SIR,—On behalf of the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League, we desire to congratulate you heartily on your change of view on the question of Woman Suffrage, and on your speech in the House of Commons on that subject. We note that you stated that when once the differentia of sex is ignored it would be difficult to introduce any other between the case of women and that of men. We therefore urge you to use your influence and the strong support you have on this question to secure the widest possible basis of enfranchisement for women in the coming Electoral Reform Bill.

C. DESPARD, President.

E. KNIGHT, Hon. Treasurer.

ANNE E. CORNER, Acting Political Organiser. FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD, Secretary.

Woman Suffrage Deputation Received by the Prime Minister.

The deputation of women which was received by Mr. Lloyd George on March 29 at Downing Street was supported by twenty-four Woman Suffrage organisations, including the National Union, the Women's Freedom League, and the United Suffragists, also by the British Women's Temperance Association, the National Federation of Women Workers, the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs, the National Union of Women Workers, the National Women's Labour League, the Women's Liberal Federation, the Railway Women's Guild, and the Women's Co-operative Guild. It included representatives of women workers in all professions, trades, and occupations : omnibus conductors in uniform, police, women in khaki, doctors, nurses, dentists, a bacteriologist, a carpenter, munition workers, journalists, oxy-acetylene welders, brassworkers, vandrivers, railway women, and textile workers.

The deputation was introduced by Mrs. Fawcett, President of the National Union, who declared that the support given by suffragists to the limited recommendation for Woman Suffrage of the Speaker's

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Conference was conditional on Woman Suffrage being an integral part of the Government Bill. The speakers were Miss Anderson (H.M. Inspector of Factories), Miss Mary MacArthur, Mrs. Watts (Canada), Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Pankhurst, and a Welsh woman, Mrs. Edwards, whose speech in Welsh "went straight to my heart," said Mr. Lloyd George Mrs. Despard reminded the Prime Minister of his

declarations on the importance of Woman Suffrage to the Liberal Federation at Bath in 1911, and urged that there should be no longer delay and that women should be enfranchised on the broadest possible lines

Miss Anderson (H.M. Inspector of Factories), from her intimate knowledge of the conditions under which women worked in factories, claimed that the representatives of men only could not legislate wisely or justly for these women. Miss Mary Macarthur said she did not ask for a measure of women's enfranchisement because of women's service in war time, but because political power was needed by women workers to protect their interests in times of war and of peace. Mrs. Watts, from Canada, said that it was discouraging to Canadians who hoped to get inspiration and ideals from the Old Country to find it was so backward on the subject of votes for women.

Women's Suffrage to be included in the Bill,

In the course of his speech the Prime Minister said :

said: — The attitude of the Government with regard to Women's Suffrage will be this, that they leave the question of voting for women as an open question, so far as they are con-cerned, for the House. So far as the Government are concerned, the majority, I will not say the overwhelming majority, of the Government—I do not know the exceptions -will vote for the inclusion of women's suffrage, for its retention in the measure. Mrs. Fawcett puts to me-with retention in the measure. Mrs. Fawcett puts to me—with a very painful recollection—what happened before, through, I am convinced, the fault of no one, but through a mis-understanding—a very painful misunderstanding—which led to a good deal of misapprehension. In the circum-stances the misapprehension was very easily explained, or rather it was not very easy to explain. At any rate, I have talked with Mr. Speaker about it, and it rate, I have taked with Mr. Speaker about it, and it is essential even to get a vote upon the question, that it should be in the Bill. Therefore the proposal of Mr. Speaker will be in the Bill. We have not yet decided which of the two ages we shall insert.

Member of Government in Charge. Government Machinery to be Used.

Our view is that this ought to be a House of Commons measure, that is the principle upon which we have pro-ceeded, and not a Government Bill-that these are not Government proposals, but proposals of the House of Commons to conduct which through the House of Commons

Commons to conduct which through the House of Commons we propose to use the machinery of the Government: We shall incorporate the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference in the Bill; the Bill will be conducted through the House of Commons by a member of the Govern-ment. The inclusion of the Woman Suffrage recommenda-tion will be left to the open vote of the House. But the temper of the House is such that I have not the faintest doubt that the majority will be so overwhelming that the minority will be quite negligible. And from that point of view I think it a great advantage to the women's cause, because I can see from what has happened among my own because I can see from what has happened among my own colleagues in the Government the effect which the war has had upon the attitude of political leaders towards the women's question. Some of its most formidable antagonists have been completely converted inside the Government as well as outside, and the view expressed to me by a very shrewd, competent, and experienced Parliamentarian last night was that the minority would be so small as to be almost insignificant (hear, hear), and I apprehend there-fore no danger or difficulty from that point of view.

Unjustifiable, Illogical-But the Only Way.

After divulging the plan of a strong opponent of Woman Suffrage to wreck it by proposing that the

by anything in the nature of consent; and for that reason

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I strongly urge you, however unpalatable it may be and however undesirable from the point of view of excluding a very considerable number of women who have rendered great service in this war-I strongly urge you to stand by this proposal and say that that will satisfy you, and later on I have no doubt (laughter)-once you have got on the register, and once men are convinced that you can behave just as well as they can, and that you can behave franchise which is entrusted to you without absolutely subverting society and pulling down its pillars—I have no doubt that then the men will be satisfied to give you exactly the same vote as ours

the same vote as ours." At the close of the Prime Minister's speech Mrs. Drake, although not a member of the deputation, urged that when the Bill was framed the claims of working women should not be forgotten. If a workman under 30 needed the vote to protect his interest, did not a working woman need it just as urgently? it just as urgently

Mrs. Fawcett thanked the Prime Minister for receiving Mrs. Fawcett thanked the Frime Minister for receiving the deputation and as they returned homeward many suffragists were convinced that this was no time for slacking, and to win an early victory for our Cause we must during the next few weeks work harder than ever

before to secure it. As they listened to the Prime Minister they almost imagined themselves back in 1912 listening to an advocate of the Conciliation Bill before it was torpedoed, warning them of the dangers of wreeking amendments. Members of the House of Commons must be made to realise their great responsibility in securing the enfranchisement of women now

BEHIND THE GRILLE.

From the so-called "Ladies' Gallery," which could be better named "The Black Hole," about thirty women listened to the proceedings in the House of Commons on March 28, when Mr. Asquith moved a resolution on Electoral Reform. Anyone who has sat in this cage must have felt, as I did, how typical it was of the position accorded to women through many generations. We are told that we must be kept high up on a pedestal-high up, certainly, but how curious that all the comfortable places should be below. One of the strongest antisuffragist speakers stated that the enfranchisement of women would be a death-blow to that chivalry towards women which had always existed in our nation. It is difficult to realise why this need be, but, if we must choose, I think we should put "No demonstration of equality before chivalry. any kind will be permitted in the gallery." "You must not move a chair." "You must not take notes or write anything of any kind in the Gallery." By this time I felt like asking, "May I breathe?" but I knew the answer to that, since breathing was almost impossible in that atmosphere. But, in spite of all these disabilities, it was an historic occasion.

The sight of Mr. Asquith moving a resolution for a Bill to include women's suffrage, and laying special stress on the need for woman to have a voice in the problems of reconstruction, made up for a great deal of discomfort. His apologia was probably one of the finest that have ever been heard in that House, but it was a pity that he could not resist making a reference to the "detestable campaign," for which, after all, he was mainly responsible. The Prime Minister's speech was perhaps the best he has made since he took office, and one newspaper describes him as "reverting to his rôle of democrat." After two such speeches, and the voting, it is inconceivable that the House of Commons should fail to deal fairly with us. But the "old Adam" is still strong. The anti-suffragists brought up all their reserves, from rifles to siege guns, from vague suggestions of untimely legislation and unpatriotism to open opposition now and for all time. Mr. Arnold Ward, who is surely "matter out of place," his real place being the Early Victorian era, raged furiously for nearly an hour on the superiority of man and the need for him to continue to be the master and for woman to remain in her proper place as an "auxiliary. What can be the state of intelligence of constituents who send men like this to represent them. He was followed by many of the die-hards, Sir Henry Craik.

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Sir Francis Lowe, Sir Frederick Banbury, etc., but their speeches sounded strangely antediluvian as they prattled to nearly empty benches of "con-tentious questions," "majorities of women," and all the other "shibboleths" which the wind of war has not been able to blow out of their brains.

All suffragists welcome Mr. Asquith's sincere, if belated, conversion. "Women," he tells us, "have worked out their own salvation." Although we had endeavoured for years to tell him how capable and wise we were, he rejected our efforts to enlighten him. Like the nobleman of Capernaum, he doubted although he had heard. It was that nobleman whom our Lord rebuked in the words, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." was with Mr. Asquith; he required signs. It needed a European upheaval, a welter of sorrows, before his eyes were opened, before he could see what woman could do, before he realised there was practically nothing she could not do. He has accepted the signs and wonders, and no longer sets his implacable will against woman's entry into the political world. He has, so to speak, blessed women. We breathe again !

as foolish.

There is no doubt, in spite of fervent asseverations to the contrary, that party politics are still very much alive, and only very slightly covered by a thin crust of patriotism. But the voting resulted in 341 for Mr. Asquith's motion and 62 against. In that lies our hope, and let us see that one of our first actions when we have power will be the tearingdown of those iron bars behind which they have shut us, both in the House of Commons, and (symbolically) in everything which pertains to labour, learning, and life. Anne E. Corner.

AN "EYE-OPENING" CAMPAIGN.

There are still, unfortunately, some Members representing Scottish constituencies whose eyes are still holden and who have not suffered a sea change. In these constituencies suffragists should organise a vigorous campaign. These men must be taught that women form an integral part of their constituency. Mr. H. J. Mackinder has just been to Glasgow, and he was interviewed by Miss Frances Melville, B.D., upon the subject of woman suffrage in the Electoral Reform Bill. He fears that if women vote the homes of Britain will be destroyed ! It may be flattering to woman to magnify her importance in the home to such an extent that were she for one minute to cease rocking the cradle to consider a political question, much less to venture to put on her hat and sally forth to record her vote, the home fabric would crumble to dust. But if flattering, it is also nonsensical. Let Mr. Mackinder rest easy; when women vote they will soon have decent homes; they will not tolerate the abominations to-day misnamed "Home"; the housing question will be dealt with, the feeding and education of children. Where women vote they will see to it that men and women get leisure in which to enjoy home life. Men like Mr. Mackinder, narrow-minded, prejudiced, old-fashioned people, by excluding women from the ballot, rob them of their homes, make motherhood a toil and pain, stint the woman's intellect and undermine the children's health. They are cruel in their arrogance, as well

In all constituencies where this cant is talked suffragists should be at work, and the anti-suffragist representative of the male electorate should be taught that he and his sex are no longer omnipotent. In Glasgow we have several antiquated gentlemen whose views are behind the age. We must teach them that it is because of our homes, our children and our men we want the vote.

EUNICE G. MURRAY.

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THE VOTE. Proprietors :--THE MINERVA PUBLISHING Co., LTD. Offices :--144, High Holborn, W.C.

FRIDAY, April 6th, 1917.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows :--To the Editor—on all editorial matters.

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THE NEW ERA.

Rapidly and with dramatic suddenness events are moving. Every day brings its surprises; and it may be-we dare to hope it--that soon in some unexpected and sudden way, by one of those lightning-strokes of destiny for which we are listening, the horror that is weighing upon our hearts will be lifted, and we shall find ourselves preparing not for war but for

Last week we were acclaiming the Russian Revolution and its splendid programme. This week it is our joy to announce that a British House of Commons has taken the first practical step towards the establishment of a true democracy. By an overwhelming majority Mr. Asquith's resolution-"That legislation should promptly be introduced on the lines of the resolutions reported from the Speaker's Conference"-was passed; and the Prime Minister's answer to the deputation of Suffrage Societies and women-workers which was received by him at Downing Street left no room for doubt as to the intentions of the Government. A Bill following the lines laid down by the Speaker's Conference is already being drafted, and some form of Woman's Suffrage will be included.

There are several points in the debate which deserve special notice. We of the Women's Freedom League have never disguised our conviction that the admission of women, as women, to citizens' rights is part of a larger programme. Not for honour or dignity do we desire to take our place in the councils of the nation and to share the labours of those who control our destinies. It is the power and opportunity to serve in a wider and more permanent manner than we have been able to do in the past that we demand; and we are particularly glad to see that Mr. Asquith recognises this. Having spoken of the value of women's work in war time, he goes on to say: "But what I confess moves me still more in this matter is the problem of reconstruction when the war is over.

Entering into detail, he speaks of the new order which must necessarily arise, and the questions regarding "woman's labour and woman's functions and activities, upon which, in justice, her voice should be heard." That is well; but we would take an even wider range. We know-late events have shown this more clearly than ever-that man and

woman rise and fall together, and that there is no branch of human activity which does not require her thought and care.

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We cannot help feeling a little amused by the reference made in this speech to the suggested age-"I myself have always thought," says Mr. limit. Asquith, "that when once you have resolved to ignore the differentia of sex it was difficult to introduce any other discrimination between the case of women and that of men." But why discrimination? That is where our difficulty comes in. It is quite possible that the time will come when Mr. Asquith himself will rise to this larger view. We, in the while rejoicing in the removal of sex-disqualification, hold to our first object : " Equal terms for man and woman.

The opposition was as feeble as were the numbers it represented. Mr. Salter, mover of the amendment, which was merely to throw back the whole question, did not oppose Woman's Suffrage. In fact, moderately, he approved of it. But-we wonder where and how he has been living—he is afraid of "an intense and bitter opposition." This would introduce controversy, engross the time and energy of the House and divert public attention from the big matter in hand, "winning the war."

Mr. Arnold Ward was much more outspoken. "There can be," says this well-trained person, "give-and-take upon registration, upon plural voting and upon redistribution. But there cannot be any give-and-take on the subject of Woman's Suffrage." On which we can only remark that Mr. Arnold Ward must keep his opinion. Were he con-vinced against his will he would remain of the same opinion still. We would remind him that personal opinions are not arguments.

Mr. Pollock, in support of the resolution, crushes one of the pleas put forward by the Opposition. Mr. Salter had alluded in one of his "purple passages" to the feelings of our soldiers should they see in the trenches "the horrid spectacle of members of this House talking about Woman's Suffrage, the franchise, and so on." Says Mr. Pollock-and some of use have had similar experiences-" A little time ago I had the opportunity of reading a letter from a soldier who wrote from Mesopotamia, and, so far from being satisfied with what was going on in this House, he said, 'As for Westminster, if only Robertson would march a battalion or two and shut the whole place up, he would have done a real service to the war and to the nation.' I believe that if we could explain to those who are fighting for us that, while they are fighting, we are engaged in giving them something which will be useful to them when they return home-we should earn their gratitude and not their obloquy.

That recalls to our mind the story told by a nurse in one of the splendidly managed women's units abroad. A young officer, convalescent after careful and skilled attendance, said to her: "You are all suffragists here. Well! If I had my way, the women should have eight votes to our one.

Mr. Clynes, as representing organised labour, said emphatically that women should enjoy the same citizen-rights as men. He scornfully flouted the idea that if we gave votes to all these millions of women there would be no difference of opinion on the great and varied questions with which they would have to concern themselves. History, experience, and the general working of politics show that women are no more likely to be agreed upon such questions than men. He regards this as a most opportune moment for extending to women the franchise rights that cannot be long delayed.

Purposely we have left the Prime Minister's speech to the last, and we are glad to be able to read it in the light of the answers he gave to us when we went to him on deputation. Like Mr. Asquith FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1917.

he emphasised that which must follow the war -Reconstruction. What does that mean? Ably he gives his definition of the word. "The trade of this country, the industries of this country, the relations of capital and labour, the relations of one class of labour to another, questions of the conditions of life in this country, the health of the people, the housing of the people, the education of the people, the relations of this country to the whole Empire, and the relations of the Empire to the rest of the world. These are gigantic problems." He points out clearly the unfairness-nay, the impossibility-of dealing with these momentous issues in a Parliament elected on the present basis.

In the course of his plea for the inclusion of women in the new Reform Bill he gives some interesting reminiscences. When he was Minister of Munitions he had to set women and men to some very dangerous work. A new element had to be introduced into the manufacture of shells. There were several fatal accidents. These were amongst the women workers; but there was no panic. They never

Nor do we. But we go further. We cannot, and will not, believe that the sex-discrimination in politics, which is the last halting-place of the timid, can survive the shock of change. Given this first step and, in a comparatively short period of time, man and woman will stand together true, equal, alert in every nerve for the highest and most arduous service to the race

ELECTORAL REFORM DEBATE.

Mr. Asquith received a great ovation on rising to move the following resolution: "That this House records its thanks to Mr. Speaker for his services in presiding over the Electoral Reform Conference, and is of opinion that legislation should promptly be introduced on the lines of the resolutions reported from the Conference." After setting forth the Government's difficulties in dealing with the old register and relating the events which led to the summoning of a representative conference of members of both Houses of Parliament, presided over by the Speaker, Mr. Asquith expressed warm appreciation of Mr. Lowther's success in "a very arduous undertaking," and briefly reviewed its important results. To have achieved unanimity in thirty-four out of thirty-seven resolutions on thorny problems which have been "the subject of embittered controversy during the life-time of a generation," was, he said, " one of the most remarkable concordats in our political history.

Mr. Asquith's Confession of Faith as a Suffragist.

I come now, he said, to one question upon which they report they were divided, and that their recommendation represents the opinion of the majority. The majority decided first that some measure of woman suffrage should be adopted, and next, translating that into concrete fact, be adopted, and next, translating that into concrete fact, that any woman who possesses herself or is the wife of a man who possesses the proposed new Local Government quali-fication, that is to say, six months' occupation as owner or tenant of land or premises, and has attained a specified age, say, thirty, or perhaps thirty-five, shall have the Parliamentary franchise. Here we are on much more chleate recound elicate ground.

Greek and Briton.

The House will not be unprepared to hear that I myself, and I believe many others, no longer regard this question from the standpoint which we occupied before the war. (Cheers.) During the whole of my political life I have opposed the various schemes which have been from time to time presented to Parliament for giving the Parliamentary vcte, whether piecemeal or wholesale, to women. It is only right to say I have as consistently advocated, and done my st to promote, the opening out to women of other spheres of activity which have been in the past confined exclusively to men. Why, and in what sense, have I changed my view? There was in ancient Greece a poet named Stesichorus, who was ill-advised enough in a fit of perverted inspiration to compose a lampoon upon the character and conduct of Helen, the wife of Menelaus. She was a lady who had the advantage of being connected by relationship with a god. (Laughter.) The result was that the poet was smitten with blindness. The result was that the poet was smitten with blindness. Thereupon, I think, after consulting the oracle, he con-ceived the happy idea of writing some lines, which are preserved by Plato, and in which he developed the novel theory that it was not Helen but a phantom who had simulated her form who had fascinated Paris of Troy, which led to all the subsequent troubles. Thereupon, by way of

Women's Indispensable War Service.

My opposition to woman suffrage has always been based, and based solely, upon considerations of public expediency. Some years ago I happened to use the expression: "Let Some years ago 1 happened to use the expression: "Let the women work out their own salvation." They have worked it out during this war. (Cheers.) How could we have carried on the war without them? Short of actually bearing arms in the field, there is hardly a service which has contributed, or is contributing, to the maintenance of our cause in which women have not been at least as active and as efficient as more (Cheme). and as efficient as men. (Cheers.) Wherever we turn we see them doing work with success and without any detriment to the prerogatives of their sex which three years ago would have been regarded as falling exclusively within the province of men. What, I confess, moves me still more than sentiment in this matter is the probable reconstruction after the war is over.

Neither Just nor Expedient to Withhold Votes from Women.

The questions which will then necessarily arise in regard to women's labour and women's functions and activities in the new order of things—for do not doubt that the old order will be changed—(hear, hear)—are questions in regard to which I for my part feel it impossible, consistently with either justice or expediency, to withhold from women the power and the right of making their voice directly heard. (Cheers.) And let me add, since the war began, now nearly three years ago, we have had no recurrence of that detestable campaign which disfigured the annals of political agitation in this country—(hear, hear)—and no one can now contend that we are yielding to violence what we refused to concede to argument. (Cheers.) I am therefore prepared to acquiesce in the general proposition of the majority of the Conference that some measure of woman suffrage should be conferred. In regard to the form The questions which will then necessarily arise in regard woman suffrage should be conferred. In regard to the form which the recommendation takes, I understand it to be prompted partly by a desire to prevent a preponderance female as compared with male voters, and partly by a setting up any class or business qualification. (Hear, h (Hear, hear.) I say nothing on the delicate point of the age or ages which are suggested. A very able and energetic lady—a and made the counter suggestion that it was the younger women who most needed enfranchisement, and that if age was to come into the matter at all it should rather be at the other end of the scale. (Laughter.) I do not pronounce any judgment as between those two views. I myself have always thought, and I have often said in this House, that once you have resolved to ignore the difference β fsex it is difficult to use any other discrimination than that used in the case of men. (Hear, hear.) That is

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flinched. "We had some difficulty for two or three days afterwards with some of the men in getting them to work at night, but we had never any difficulty with regard to the women. Why? They said, This is our only chance of sharing the dangers with our brothers now in France.' And they helped to save the situation at a very critical time

When," he proceeds, "we come to recast the whole of our industrial system, are we going to fling them out without giving them a voice in determining the conditions? All I can say is, it is an outrage, it is ungrateful, unjust, inequitable. I do not believe the people of this country will do it.

C. DESPARD.

House of Commons, March 28, 1917.

reward the poet had his sight restored. (Laughter.) I am reward the poet had his sight restored. (Laughter.) I am not going to follow the devious and not very candid pro-cedure of the poet. (Laughter.) Some of my friends may think, like him, my eyes, which for years in this matter have been clouded by fallacies, sealed by illusions, have at last been opened to the truth. (Laughter.) In point of fact, as far as I am concerned, there has been no occasion for the intervention of any experiment of general Lagrange for the intervention of any supernatural agency. I am not in the least ashamed—indeed, I am glad—to have had the opportunity of disclosing the process which has operated upon my mind.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1917.

Legislate Promptly. I have gone through the various practical recommenda-tions, the result of the work of this Conference, and in my resolution I invite the House and the Government, con-fident in both cases that my appeal is addressed for the most part to willing and sympathetic ears, to declare that we should legislate, and legislate promptly, in regard to these matters. (Cheers.) I have endeavoured to show their urgency—an urgency which, as I have said, is not removed and is not lessened, but to a large extent is created, by the continuance of the war. No one would propose to introduce legislation on the lines of these recommendations, bristling as they do with what used to be considered highly controversial points, unless there was, as there is, highly controversial points, unless there was, as there is, a good prospect that it will be handled on the floor of the House in the same spirit that animated the Speaker's Conference. (Hear, hear.) It is my deliberate and con-sidered opinion that in no other way can we make the next House of Commons, whether it is elected in consequence of a sudden dissolution or whether it springs into existence effluxion of time-in no other way can we make the next House of Commons an authentic and authoritative exponent of the national will in the infinitely varied and complex area of problems, both domestic and Imperial, which at the end of the war it will be our first duty to confront and to solve. (Cheers.)

Plea for Postponement.

Mr. SALTER (Unionist, North Hants) moved an amend-ment to the effect that legislation should be introduced immediately to obtain a new register and to provide means of voting for those electors who are absent on naval or military service, but that with these exceptions the attention of Parliament should be wholly devoted to the attention of Parhament should be wholy devoted to the prosecution of the war. He stated that the course pro-posed by the motion would perturb our Allies (cries of "What about Russia?"), disconcert and discourage our fighting men, weaken and divert the energies of our people at home. The amendment was seconded by SIR FRANCIS LOWE (Unionist, Birmingham), who declared that the House could deal only with registration, not franchise.

The Prime Minister's Strong Support of Votes for Women.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE made a powerful appeal to the House to support Mr. Asquith's motion, and, in dealing with the Women's claims, he said :-

I come to the proposal with regard to women's franchise. Here, differing from my right hon. friend, I have always been a supporter of women's franchise, but what he said about the effect of the war is absolutely true. There is no doubt that the war has had an enormous effect upon multic original for a first state of the superscript of the same state of public opinion so far as this question is concerned. I can see that in the effect on some of my colleagues, who are not above being influenced by public opinion. (Laughter and cheers.) And rightly so. Facts have altered public opinion, and between facts and public opinion their views

Women's Work Vital to Success in the War.

Women's work vita to Success in the war. Women's work in the war has been a vital contribution to our success. (Cheers.) It would have been impossible to produce that overwhelming mass of ammunition which we had at the Somme had it not been for the work of those women, and they have shown a devotion and zeal and, may I say, courage, which are beyond challenge. I remember perfectly well when I was Minister of Munitions we had yery dapogroup work. It involved a smeel alteration in very dangerous work. It involved a special alteration in one element of our shells. We had to effect an alteration. If we had manufactured the whole thing anew it would have involved the loss of hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition at a time when we could not afford it. But the adaptation of the old element with a fuse is a very dangerous operation, and there were several fatal accidents. dangerous operation, and there were several ratal accidents. It was all amongst the women workers in the munition factories; there was never a panic. They stuck to their work; they knew the peril; they never ran away from it; and I remember that when the first Zeppelin raids were made, when bombs were dropped outside important munition factories—I do not want to say too much about the more, we had some differilies for two or three days the men; we had some difficulties for two or three days afterwards with some of them in getting them to work at night in the munition factories—we had never any diffifor the simple reason, they said, that "this is our only chance of participating in the dangers which our brothers run in France," and they were proud of it and boasted of it, and they helped to save the situation at a very critical moment

Are You Going to Fling Them Out Without a Voice? If we are going to settle the conditions of labour we have

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to deal with hundreds of thousands, running now into millions, of women in work in which they were never engaged before. When you come to recast the whole of industrial system are you going to fling them out our industrial system are you going to fing them out without giving them a voice in determining the conditions? All I can say is, it is an outrage; it is ungrateful, unjust, inequitable; and I do not believe the people of this country will do it. That is why the women's question has become very largely a war question. It has been said that the moment you came to war women could contribute nothing. They passed out of the way, and then men came forward. That has not been the case

Question to be Left to the House.

With regard to this, the recommendations of Mr. Speaker's Conference are not quite in the same category-as the other recommendations. For instance, they are not as the other recommendations. For instance, they are how unanimous. In the second place, in one important respect they are indeterminable. That is the question of age. Here the Government propose to leave this question in so far as they have any authority or voice in the matter to be determined by the House of Commons. I have not the faintest doubt what the vote of the House of Commons

I earnestly trust that the House of Commons will show I earnestly trust that the House of Commons will show the same spirit [as has been shown by the Speaker's Con-ference] not merely of conciliation, but, may I say respect-fully, of good sense, and carry through these recommenda-tions substantially in the form in which they were made

and without any of the bitterness of political controversy. Mr. ARNOLD WARD, opposing Mr. Asquith's motion, considered that the position of women in politics should be auxiliary and that men, who decided the issue during the war, should continue to be the masters in time of peace.

war, should continue to be the masters in time of peace. Mr. POLLOCK, supporting the motion, said he did not hold very strongly with mandates of Parliament but there was an audible expression of feeling in the country; "people desire to see the whole of these controversies moved out of the way and the country equipped as strongly as possible to deal with vital questions of recovery after the war."

Mr. MACKINDER urged that present compromise should go further than the franchise, taking in the whole political machinery, including the House of Lords.

"Beggared of Arguments Against Woman Suffrage,"

Mr. WALTER LONG, who last summer originated the pro-osal that a representative conference should deal with the difficult question of franchise reform, spoke strongly in favour of Mr. Asquith's motion, and implored Mr. Salter favour of Mr. Asquith's motion, and implored Mr. Salter and his friends to desist from their policy of destruction and to join the Government in a policy of construction. He declared that he was "absolutely beggared in his supply of arguments for criticising and attacking the extension of the franchise to women"; he had firmly believed that women were physically prevented from performing most of the tasks which are closely connected with Government; they could not fairly be asked to govern because they could not take their share in maintaining and enforcing the not take their share in maintaining and enforcing the Government of the country. No man, he added, who follows what women have done can say that now. Though should not be extended to women, he would rather support the whole of the recommendations of the Speaker's Con-ference than raise his voice against the granting of recognition to the women, without whose heroism, self-denial, skill, and endurance the country never could have faced the crisis through which it was passing. If this golden opportunity were lost it might never recur. COLONEL CHALONER declared that to give women the vote

would be the most disastrous and revolutionary measure which could be conceived.

Women must have same Citizen Rights as Men.

MR. CLYNES declared that the Labour Party welcomed a scheme which would make a handsome beginning in the case of women and, in the case of men, remove many grievances. He paid warm tribute to the war service of women, but insisted that not for this service but as women they should enjoy the same citizen rights as men, giving them the power and the privilege to make and shape the

destinies of their country. MR. CURRIE thought the opponents of the motion had made out an uncommonly poor case and he had no hesitation in saying that the feeling in Scotland was practically unani-mous in favour of the reform.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS admitted that he had no idea women She rathing Macros admitted that had had had been able to render such useful war service and, in view of what they have done, he had no right to say hey should have no voice in the policy of the country. Mr. A. C. MORTON stated that he found opinion outside

Towards Victory in Nova Scotia. Bills granting women full suffrage and the right to practise law have passed second reading in the Nova Scotia Legislature.

THEY SUPPORT US.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1917.

of the House of Commons largely changing in favour of giving women a vote as soon as po ceible

A Bold Scheme now or Party Feeling will Supervene.

MAJOR WOOD urged the necessity of a bold scheme of reform now, as after the war party feeling will supervene nder it impossible.

SIR HENRY CRAIK considered that the majority of women,

including war workers, would be ready to say: "We doubt whether it is wise to accept the vote." -Mr. SHORT, stating that he was in favour of adult suffrage, expressed his Intention of supporting the recom-mendations of the Conference.

SIR FREDERICK BANNURY insisted that the House was a moribund body and had no right to deal with anything but the war. "Could the women's suffrage proposals of the Conference be seriously maintained in the House?" he asked. "If they admitted women were entitled to the vote how could they limit it to women over thirty?"

No Extension to Men Unless Women are Included.

MR. BONAR LAW, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House said: "I am perfectly convinced that in this House of Commons at least no Bill of any kind extending shape or other did not give the franchise to women. (Cheers.) I have not made many sacrifices for that cause. (Laughter.) I would not divide our party on a question which at the time I did not think of so much importance as others. I admit that the war has altered my view on Women's Suffrage. I do feel more strongly about it, and I myself would think it wrong to extend, and would do my best to prevent any extension of the suffrage to men which did not also include women. (Cheers.)

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR announced that the Nationalists would vote for the Motion and stated that the franchise proposals applied to Ireland equally with England. He said he wished the question of woman suffrage had been left to an Irish Parliament. The point of view might not be the same the same.

Some Press Comments.

As for Woman Suffrage, it is very properly to be left to the free decision of Parliament, and after yesterday's debate there can be little doubt what that decision will be. Mr. Asquith is by no means alone in his frank and enter-taining conversion to the cause. The one essential point, as it seems to us, if there is to be no remaining bitterness should be thoroughly understood throughout the country. That case, let us repeat, rests neither on the triumph of agitation, for agitation has long been stilled, nor on the agriation, for agriation has long been stilled, her on the notion, which every patriotic woman resents, that the vote is a mere reward for good behaviour. It is based wholly on the palpable injustice of withholding such protection as the vote affords from a sex which has for the first time taken its full share in the national effort and will have sufficient difficulty in any case to maintain the position which it has won Times which it has won .- Times.

Having called in the women in our hour of industrial and economic necessity, and having witnessed the splendour and efficiency of their response, can we—the emergency being over—proceed to bow them out with the assurance that the superior sex would henceforth look after their affairs? To ask such questions is to leave all intelligent criticism silent.—Daily News.. For heaven's sake let us get out of our caves ! There is

no room for troglodytes in this amazing new world, with its mighty citizen army, its cohorts of effective women workers—and its suggestive Russian revolution! The men and women who have saved England must remake England. -Daily Express.

would have been more courageous in the Government to have given woman suffrage the benefit of Ministerial support, since, as Mr. Bonar Law urges, a measure of support. electoral reform cannot be carried without the enfranchise. ment of women. We hope the result of leaving woman suffrage at the mercy of an unrestrained opposition will not be to bring about the failure of the Bill.—Yorkshire be to br Observer.

Montgomery Boroughs Campaign.

The campaign opened on March 8, and lasted three weeks. Several successful meetings have been held in each of the following towns: --Welshpool, Newtown, Llan-saintfraid, Llanfylin, Oswestry. Mrs. Barrs (Welshpool), kindly gave a very successful drawing-room meeting, at which Miss Munro spoke on the present political situation. Mrs. James Rees paid a fine tribute to the work of the Women's Freedom League. A meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall for the munition girls, who abandoned their dance in order to be present. Great enthusiasm prevailed. Later a public meeting on the social evil was held in the same hall.

THE VOTE.

Your League has just carried out very active campaigns in the North Eastern and North Western Counties, in Mid-Wales and in Aberystwyth; to-day we are attacking the South. High railway fares, etc., make all this work especially expensive at this time: much money is necessary, and large and small contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.

THE LEAGUE IS THE MEMBERS. Our Cause is the Cause of us all. We are confident that you will agree that this is no time for saving, but for large expenditure, and that every reader of these words will rally round us in our determination that Votes for Women shall resound all over Britain as we watch for the rising of the Glorious Sun. E. KNIGHT.

In Llansaintfraid the two meetings were presided over by Miss Kate Evans, of Bôdgwym. Newtown held open-air meetings and a meeting at the Girl's Friendly Society pre-sided over by Miss Morgan, of Tynrethin. At Llanfylin Miss Munro explained to the associates of the district Girls' Friendly Society the dangers of the Criminal Law Amend-ment Bill, a unanimous resolution against this reintroduc-tion of the discredited C.D. Acts and calling for the age of consent to be raised to 18 was sent to the Grand Council of consent to be raised to 18 was sent to the Grand Council of

consent to be raised to 18 was sent to the Grand Council of the Girls' Friendly Society. The crowning success of the campaign was the enthusiastic "At Home" to welcome Mrs. Despard to Llanfylin. Free-dom League members very kindly gave the tea for more than 200 guests. After an enjoyable musical programme the audience was held spellbound by Mrs. Despard's "Prome-theus Unbound." Miss Munro spoke on the importance of women's enfranchisement now. Several League members travelled many miles to hear the lecture, which was voted to be the greatest intellectual treat ever enjoyed in the town.

Aberystwyth,

Aberystwyth, Wednesday, March 21, saw Aberystwyth agog with enthu-siasm. Mrs. Despard had arrived for the first time. A dense crowd packed the Buarth Hall; Miss Alix Clark took the chair. Miss Munro dwelt on the vital importance of the women's movement, and was heard with great attention. Loud and continuous applause greeted Mrs. Despard, who for over an hour gave a most lucid and inspiring suffrage speech. A resolution demanding immediate enfranchisement of women was corride unanimously. Sourced more home is include of women was carried unanimously. Several members joined the League and are anxiously awaiting the formation of a local branch in their midst

Aberdovey.

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THE SLIGHTEST WEAKENING IN THE FIGHT WOULD BRING DEFEAT.

This branch, on March 22, warmly welcomed the President This branch, on March 22, warmly welcomed the President to a well-organised meeting in the Council Schools. Mr. Rowlands, J.P., presided and Miss Munro spoke on suffrage prospects. Mrs. Despard's lecture on Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" and its application to present conditions met with enthusiastic appreciation. Our thanks for organising this splendid meeting are due to our good friend Mrs. Frances Lewes, hon. secretary of the branch, who always

a large number of Vores and a quantity of literature sold. ALIX M. CLARK, Hon. Organiser.





South Coast Campaigns. After the West the South !!!

After the west the South 11 To help our Southern branches in their brave struggles to uphold the suffrage banner in a time of special difficulty. Miss Munro and Miss Alix Clark are proceeding this week to Bournemouth, and thence to Portsmouth and Southampton. Drawing-room, public and open-air meetings will be held. Miss Alix Clark will call upon all members and sympathisers immediately on arriving in each branch, so please all rally round the flag of "Votes for Women" and make the South-coast campaign even more successful than that held in Wales.

IMPORTANT.

In view of the pressure on our space of the House of Commons debate on March 28 and of the deputation to the Prime Minister on March 29, also of the earlier press day owing to the Easter holidays, we are obliged to hold over till next week Branch notes and other usual features .- ED.

EASTER HOLIDAYS .- SPECIAL NOTICE.

The Offices of the Women's Freedom League and Minerva Publishing Company will be closed from 1 p.m. Thursday, April 5, till Wednesday, April 11, 9.30 a.m.

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