

THE VOTE,
MARCH 21, 1919.
ONE PENNY.

THE ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE OF HUSBANDS.

DOROTHY EVANS.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1919.

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.

WOMEN AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

"I understand that the Benchers of the four Inns of Court are pressing the Government to allow them to institute a fifth Inn of Court for the reception of women who are expected to apply for admission as Bar students. This plan is being devised in order to overcome the practical difficulties in the social arrangements of the Inns of Court expected to arise owing to the arrival of women members.

"These practical difficulties are doubtless much exaggerated, but as the Benchers are accustomed to fulfil their functions without any reference to the persons they are supposed to represent, there seems little prospect of opinion at the Bar being consulted. I gather in the Temple that there is a considerable party which sees no reason why women should not dine in Hall with men."

—*Manchester Guardian*, March 17.

"We must bow to the inevitable—but! Women dragging their skirts round these sacred precincts! It's too absurd!" (Women do not wear dragging skirts nowadays, but that is quite a minor detail.) "Women to watch us eating! Why, we should feel we were like animals at the Zoo. Besides we ourselves belong to a period when women had not developed the healthy appetites they seem to enjoy at present. We are not quite sure we should even like to see them eat."

"We never thought it would come to this. We never thought Parliament really meant to "remove all existing inequalities of the law between men and women."

"Why, oh why, did that august body begin with our hallowed institution?"

"Year by year we creatures in bifurcated garments have sat round this hospitable board. Now and again—not often—very seldom, in fact—

Oh! we need not go into that. It happened long before the war. . . . Jones, too, is a humorous fellow, but that story he told the other night—it was a little *risqué*—not quite the story one could laugh at before her."

"In their own interest we will try and keep them out. It would not be *quite* nice for them. Let them have a separate little hostel, enamelled white, with a wild rose chintz. There they can enjoy their cocoa and salad and pursue their studies with the industry which at least must be attributed to them. If we had them here they would expect us always to be improving their minds and even our own."

"Our minds are very nice as they are. They do not need any improving. They were made up long ago. To expect us to alter them now would be cruel."

"The women of to-day are really very relentless—new-fangled, too, they are. How different from the modest, retiring maidens of our youth."

This soliloquy of Mr. Stickphast was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Newman.

"Fudge and tosh," said the latter. "All you fellows have been buried and dug up again. Build your hostel, and before the white enamel was dry you would be down on your knees entreating them to come in and dine with you."

Mr. Holford Knight was passing at the time. When pressed for his opinion he gave it. He said: "To accompany the removal of the sex disability from women practising the law with the establishment of another differentiation between men and women students is not a course which will commend itself to public opinion, and I cannot think the Benchers will lend themselves to such an absurdity."

IF you Believe in Equal Rights and Opportunities and an Equal Moral Standard for Women and Men,

Join the Women's Freedom League.

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

Name _____

Address _____

THE WEEK IN PARLIAMENT.

Last week the Increase of Rent (Restrictions) Bill was considered in Committee, amended, read the third time, and passed through the House of Commons. It provides that rents may not be raised more than 10 per cent. until the March quarter day, 1921, for England, or the May term for Scotland, for houses at £70 rental in London, £60 in Scotland, and £52 elsewhere. It also provides that the tenant should have the right of an appeal to the local sanitary authority against any increase of rent, even within the 10 per cent. limit permitted by the Bill, if the house is not fit for human habitation, or is not kept in a reasonable state of repair. Rent restrictions are, of course, good in these days when profiteering seems to have become a habit with those who trade with their fellows in the necessities of life. The crying need of the country is, however, more houses, and we are glad to see that the Government has promised to introduce its Housing Bill this week. Mr. Adamson stated in the House of Commons last week that our immediate need was for 600,000 or 700,000 new houses. The housing problem is an old one; numerous pamphlets have been written about it, and many committees have dealt with it. It was a prominent item on every candidate's election address at the General Election last December; but when will building operations begin? Mr. R. Richardson informed the House that houses which were originally built for one tenant and let at 10s. per week were now being let out in tenements at a rent of 100 per cent. increase. He further stated that this type of tenement often consisted of one room, which was not only the living room, but also the washhouse and the scullery, and that babies were born where the clothes were being washed!

With regard to the Royal Commission on Income-tax, Mr. G. Locker-Lampson asked how many women were to be appointed on this Commission, but the only reply he obtained from the Treasury was to the effect that an announcement would be made shortly as to the constitution of this Commission. In our opinion, women's organisations should have the right to nominate representative women to sit on this Commission, just as the miners were given the right to appoint their representatives to the Commission of Inquiry dealing with the coal industry. Mr. Locker-Lampson also asked if the proceedings of the Income-tax Commission would be held in public, but was told that that would be a matter for consideration of the Commission when appointed. We cannot understand the delay in appointing this Commission, and we are urging members of Parliament to press that the injustice of lumping together a husband's and wife's income and charging the tax on the joint amount shall be done away with in the next Finance Bill.

The difficulties of small householders in obtaining domestic help was brought to the notice of the Minister of Labour by Mr. Wason, who inquired if the Government would consider the advisability of establishing hostels in different centres where girls could be provided with good food, comfortable rooms, and smart uniforms, undertaking to work at so much per hour as might be agreed upon; and if the establishment could be paid for by the sums not paid for unemployment benefit? Sir Robert Horne replied that a Committee appointed by the Ministry of Reconstruction was considering this matter, and that when this Committee presented its report the matter would be gone into by the Minister of Labour, but in any case he could not agree that the expense involved should be met in the way Mr. Wason suggested.

In reply to a question asked by Mr. Lambert in regard to the approximate amount of the unemployment donation paid to men and women respectively, Mr. Wardle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour) gave the following figures:—

Men and boys	£620,000
Women and girls	£580,000

On March 12 the Navy Estimates were considered, and it was agreed that 280,000 officers, seamen, and boys, Coastguards and Royal Marines should be employed for the sea and coastguard services for the year ending March 31, 1920, and that a sum not exceeding £60,000,000 should be granted for defraying the charges for this service. In the discussion arising on the Estimates, Sir C. Kinloch Cooke pressed for more pay for seamen, and particularly for married men. He pleaded also for increased pensions for the widows of the men in the Navy who have lost their lives in the service of the Navy, and stated that these pensions in peace time range from 5s. to 9s. a week! He inquired if it was possible for a woman to live on 5s. a week, and if she had a child to bring up, how could it be done? We wholeheartedly agree with Sir Clement that a very substantial addition must be made to these pensions. Considering what this country has always owed to the gallantry of the men in the Navy, it is monstrous that their widows should receive such a niggardly pittance from the State.

On March 13 the Air Estimates were considered, which provided for the maintenance of 150,000 men of all ranks for this service during the year ending on March 31, 1920, at a cost not exceeding £45,000,000. During the discussion Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon inquired whether the Women's Royal Air Force would continue after the war, and, if so, would women be given some more amusing part of life than they had had hitherto, and not simply all the dull things, while men got all the glory? In short, he wanted to know if women would be allowed to fly! Apparently no information was given on this subject. F. A. U.

BRING AND BUY SALE.

The coffers of the Women's Freedom League are low. Funds are essential for our work. To this end

WE WANT WHITE ELEPHANTS.

The mammoth has gone. Very occasionally its bones are found, and the learned sit and piece together its mighty framework. The elephant is going too. We pamper him in the Zoo, but sooner or later he also will disappear before the approaching march of civilisation. The time is short. Save your white elephants for posterity and send them along to our Bring and Buy Sale on March 29. (See advertisement, p. 128.)

Someone may find room for the particular elephant that is taking up too much room in your abode.

Send everything you can possibly do without, wedding and birthday presents, garments, jewels, furniture, carpets, and all kinds of "jumbles," as well as useful and fancy articles for the new goods stall, addressed to Mrs. Evans at the office, any time during the week preceding the sale, and make a special point of begging from all your neighbours.

AUTHORITY: The Fundamental Problem of Society.

A course of Lectures on this subject will be given by Mr. Homer Lane (of the Little Commonwealth) at the

CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, every Tuesday at 8 o'clock, On March 25th and April 1st.

Subject: March 25th—"HEALTH: PHYSICAL and MENTAL." Fees for two remaining Lectures: reserved 7/-, unreserved 4/-. Single Lecture, 2/6. Tickets can be obtained from the Sec., Women's International League, 14, Bedford Row, W.C. 1.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Justice v Prejudice.

We are glad to hear that an influential movement has been started in Cambridge in favour of the admission of women to full membership of the university. This is a reform long overdue. It has been a monstrous injustice to women that, although they have passed the examinations with honours and have equalled or surpassed the best men of their year, they have yet been deprived of the degree. *Tempora mutantur*, and the time comes when the most obstinate or prejudices crumbles into dust. Sex prejudice is a long time dying, but it is doomed.

A Woman Attorney Wins her Case.

Women conductors have been engaged for some months on the Detroit Union Railways, and they fulfilled their duties to the full satisfaction both of the railway company and of the passengers. They were employed on the same terms of wages, hours, etc., as the men, and the Amalgamated Association of Street Car Employés had agreed to their employment should necessarily arise. When the Armistice was signed the Union, which refused to admit the women as members, demanded their dismissal by the company. The women were ready to leave their jobs, if it could be shown that the men who had previously been in their places had returned from the Army and desired their own work back. They considered that they should not be asked to turn out for anybody else, and asked for equal opportunity with men. The men declared they would strike unless the women were dismissed. The case was brought before the National War Labour Board at Washington, Miss Theresa Doland acting as attorney for the women. After several hours' deliberation a decision was arrived at that the women should not be ousted from their jobs at the demand of the men.

Women in Canada.

We learn that the Ontario Legislature are preparing to open the door to women members, and a Bill to this effect will be presented during the session which has just been opened. It is also understood that the Government will extend the suffrage allowing women to hold municipal office on the same conditions as men.

Delegates representing 100,000 members of women's societies of every province in Canada, except Prince Edward Island, at a meeting at Winnipeg have decided to form a National Women's Federation.

The N. U. T. and Equal Pay for Equal Work.

No body of workers can show a clearer claim for equal pay for equal work than can the women teachers of the country. Men and women have to go through the same course of training and to pass the same examinations. Their hours of work are equal and their duties similar. We understand that a referendum is to be taken by the National Union of Teachers on the subject of demanding equal pay for men and women teachers of the same status. The objection of men teachers to the equality of salaries seems to rest on the theory that there is a fixed amount to be divided among the teachers, and that if a woman gets *more*, a man will get *less*. But the wages fund theory in industry is an economic theory which was long ago exploded. The claim that a man must be paid more because he is normally responsible for a wife and family is based on a sense of very rough justice. The difference in salary is in no case sufficient for the maintenance of a wife and family, and is paid to the bachelor equally as to the father of ten. It is difficult to see why the woman teacher should pay for the little pleasures of the bachelor (from which she is debarred owing to the difference in her salary

and his), or for the family of the married man. As the teachers are civil servants, there seems no reason why both men and women teachers of the same status should not be paid an equal salary and an allowance made by the State for the children of married teachers on the lines of the separation allowances granted to soldiers' wives.

The Commander of the Battalion of Death.

A biography of Mme. Maria Botchkareva, who in the early days of the war organised the Russian Women's Battalion of Death, will appear shortly. She led the battalion in eight great battles and ten counter-attacks, and repeatedly distinguished herself by her rescue of the wounded under fire. This heroic woman was in London last August, and a report is now current that she has been killed by the Bolsheviki. Fortunately, at present the report lacks confirmation.

A Minimum Wage for the Stage.

The Actors' Association is trying to arrange for a minimum wage of £3 a week for actors and actresses, and to secure payment for rehearsals. The latter is considered a most important point, and it is satisfactory to know that the principle has been admitted. The demand for a minimum wage for chorus girls was met by one manager with the statement that "chorus girls are not expected to live on their wages"!

Women Archivists.

The British Red Cross Society has just appointed a woman archivist to deal with their war records. She has been a pupil at the Record Office, where it has been found that women are peculiarly adapted to the work. Six post-graduate women students are engaged at the Record Office on a "Repertory of British Archives." A number of women at the Record Office are working for the Colonial Governments, and quite a number of American women have also come over to make investigations on medieval records.—*The Times*, March 13.

The Queen and Housing.

We think women can rightly claim to be the practical sex. The report of the Housing Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee, composed of women and presided over by Lady Emmott, is an eminently practical document. The Queen has shown great interest in the subject of housing, and sent for the Mayor of Bethnal Green in order that she might know the truth about the housing conditions in that borough. She was shocked to hear that the death-rate in the Brady-street area was three times as high as the average mortality for London, and that the density of population here was 417 to the acre, the health standard being 55. We all share the Queen's evident dislike of being "taken in" and of having information prepared for us which the male mind considers suitable for female digestion. "It is clear," she said, "that when I have visited the poorer districts I have been taken mainly to the highways and not the byways." She went later to see for herself.

Housing in Greater London.

Representatives of local authorities of the Greater London area, appointed in connection with the national housing and town planning scheme, in its report, issued recently, stated "that if Greater London is to be treated on equal lines with the other great areas of the kingdom so far as the population basis is concerned, then it needs at least 50,000 houses; 12,500 houses should be built in the North-Western, 10,000 in the East and North-Eastern, 7,500 in the South-Eastern, 5,000 in the Southern, 7,500 in the South-Western, and 7,500 in the West of London area. The committee urges that on no account should purely working-class areas be developed.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, March 21st, 1919.

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To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.
To the Secretary—on all other business, including VOTE orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.

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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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THE ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE OF HUSBANDS.

The figures we get from day to day in the Press regarding unemployment point a clear moral. *The Daily News* this week tells us that 25 per cent. of the unemployed women have ceased to draw their benefit, having returned home, or taken up jobs, for the most part in domestic, clerical, and commercial work.

The figures again show that men's unemployment is exceeding women's and is showing a proportionately higher increase. Some journals have been complaining that women are not giving up their posts to the men whose places they took. It will be apparent to any who examine the examples reported daily that the only trades where the women are being dismissed wholesale in favour of the men are those where they have achieved equal pay for the same job—for example, the tramway and bus conductresses of London and Newcastle-on-Tyne, the railway workers, and the women in the boot and shoe trade. This ought to make it clear to unemployed male workers that the menace of female competition, which they so greatly fear, is entirely a matter of blacklegging. It is not the sex of the worker, but the wage that constitutes the unfair competition.

It is extraordinary that the opposition to equal pay for men and women should have come from the men, especially in such professions as that of teachers, clerks, and shop assistants. Such a policy is leading to a complete turning of the tables. Instead of wives being, as hitherto, economically dependent on their husbands, soon it will be the men who will have to marry for a home. Indeed, this state of affairs is already with us. Bill, cigarette in mouth, lounges up to a girl as she hurries through the factory gates home to her dinner. "Will yer marry me, Liz?" says he. And her instant query is, "Why; wouldn't yer boss take yer back?"

There are doubtless a small number of women workers who oppose the establishment of equal pay on the grounds that it causes women to be thrown out of employment. In so far as this is due to a prejudice on the part of employers for taking men if they cannot get women any cheaper, it will die out. In trades where it undoubtedly points to a superior capacity on the part of men for the work (training and opportunity being equal), it is the

best thing that can happen to women. If there really are trades where we can never hope to hold our own on an equal footing with our male competitors, the sooner we discover the fact and turn our attention to other work the better for us and for them. Let it be remembered, however, that the poor wages women have hitherto earned have necessitated their doing a large amount of domestic work after working hours, and this extra tax on their strength has reduced their output and their endurance in heavy trades.

It would be the greatest mistake, both in the interests of individuals and for national production, if any arbitrary definition of men's trades and women's trades were to be set up by our Trades Union Congress or by any international labour bureau. The continual attempts to label various trades as "men's trades" always take on a benevolent guise. Such trades are always pleaded as "dangerous," "unhealthy," or "degrading." We have had plenty of training for the unerring detection of this "sheep's clothing."

Of such was the excuse for turning the pit-brow lassies out of their work—namely, that the men's language was so disgusting as to be unfit for women's ears.

The men in the brass polishing trade held a mass meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall to demand the exclusion of women from the trade. My readers must not mistake me. This was not a movement to prevent them from polishing their own doorknobs and fenders at home for no wages, but to exclude them from comparatively well-paid factory work where they were undercutting and ousting the men. A refusal to work beside a woman or any other worker who took less than the standard rate would have been adequate protection. But no—their distinguished speaker from London waxed eloquent on the degradation the women suffered because they were forced in this occupation "to tie up woman's crowning glory, *her hair*, in a cloth." There is no suggestion, however, of preventing women from cleaning their own flues although they resort to the same cleanly precaution during this operation. The latter business is not well enough paid to have excited any desire on the part of these reactionaries to label it a "man's trade."

Perhaps the rarest of all mental and moral qualities is that of disinterestedness. Prejudices are apt to dress themselves out as principles and a narrow expediency to vaunt itself as truth. The claim of men to make laws for women was backed by the assurance that male legislators knew what was really good for women. But, as we have frequently reiterated, good government can never take the place of self-government. To experiment on the lives of others is a dangerous expedient. Let justice be done and men may be assured that the heavens are not likely to fall in consequence.

DOROTHY EVANS.

National Union of Teachers' Conference. Cheltenham, Easter 1919.

Hon. Organiser, 1919: ALIX M. CLARK.

The Women's Freedom League are running a campaign in Cheltenham during the conference. "Equal Pay for Equal Work!" will be the battle cry. A teachers' number of *THE VOTE* will be issued dealing with special educational subjects. An appeal is made to all members, friends, and teachers who have so generously supported this campaign in the past to renew their support and sympathy this year. Please send your cheques, Treasury Notes, postal orders, and offers of service to Alix M. Clark, The Hut, Newtown, Montgomery Boroughs.

WOMEN AND FINANCE.

Now that women have a voice in the Government of the country, it imposes upon them the responsibility of attempting to understand the many important questions with which the Government and Parliament have to deal. I am frequently assured by many women that they cannot grasp the immensity of the debt that we have already incurred and the amount that will be required in the future to defray the cost of government. But, even if this is so, there is no doubt that women will be required to pay their full share. The sums are of unparalleled magnitude, and it is almost impossible for anyone not a financial expert to realise what they mean.

During the war we were engaged in a gigantic struggle—one affecting our very existence as a State—and to meet its cost we have incurred colossal liabilities. Our National Debt is now £7,500,000,000; before the war it was £650,000,000. The interest on our debt before the war was £17,221,000. It is now about £400,000,000. It is now more than 20 times greater than it was in 1914. To pay the interest will require the labour of four million workers earning £2 a week for a whole year. The Estimates for the present year are ten times greater than they were in 1914. There is an enormous increase in every department. Instead of economy and retrenchment, high salaries are being paid and new offices are being created. The remuneration of the Attorney-General is over £15,000 a year: that of the Solicitor-General is over £14,000 a year. Mr. Bonar Law gets an increase of £3,000 a year. The following table shows the Estimates for 1914 and those for the present year:—

	1914.	1919.
Civil Service	£64,700,000	£495,634,834
War "	28,071,000	440,000,000
Naval "	44,365,000	149,200,000
Debt "	17,221,000	400,000,000
Air "	Nothing.	66,500,000
Total	£154,357,000	£1,551,334,834

Mr. Bonar Law, in introducing his Budget a year ago, estimated that, if the war ended in 1918, the present sources of revenue would be sufficient to meet the normal expenditure in the future, and that there would be no need for new taxation or further borrowing. The Estimates show how much he was mistaken in his forecast. The old sources of revenue will not bring into the Treasury one-half of our expenditure during the year, and Mr. Chamberlain will either require to have new sources of revenue or continue borrowing and still further increase our National Debt. He may use as income the sums received from the sale of the ships and property that are being sold, but that will only postpone the difficulty for another year, and still further increase the amount of the Debt. The problem that has to be faced is whether it is possible to pay the interest on our debt and the cost of government in the future from our income, or whether there must be in addition a tax on capital. If this is necessary, how is it to be carried out? The net income on which Income-tax was paid in 1914 was less than £800,000,000. In consequence of profiteering and the issue of new War Loans, it is estimated now to be about £1,000,000,000. Mr. Bonar Law expected the cost of government after the war to be about £800,000,000 a year. If this sum, or anything like it, is required, it is clear that it cannot be got from income, and there must be a tax on capital to wipe out a large portion of our debt. If this is so, the first capital that should be conscribed is that which has been made during the war. Those who have made fortunes out of our misfortune should be made to disgorge some of their plunder.

The principle of the excess profits tax ought to be carried further, and we should have an excess income tax of a similar character.

The future is not very bright at present financially, but there is a gleam of hope. We are to have a League of Nations to prevent wars in the future, to settle international disputes by right instead of might. Tennyson's prophecy in "Locksley Hall" about the aerial navies fighting in the azure blue has come true. Let us hope that his other prophecy in the same poem will also be realised, and that the time approaches when

The war drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled
In the Parliament of Man, the federation of the world,
When the common sense of most shall keep a fretful realm
in awe,
And our kindly Earth shall slumber wrapt in universal law.
G. B. CLARK.

POLICE AND THE PUBLIC.

We have on more than one occasion suggested that protection for women from the police is needed in the streets of London, and we have no option but to believe it so long as women can be charged and convicted in our police-courts for "insulting behaviour," "accosting," and "soliciting" on *police evidence only*. On the 10th of this month a well-dressed married woman was brought before the Marylebone magistrate and charged with "insulting conduct in the Edgware-road, by accosting soldiers, and linking her arm in the arm of one of them." The law did not require that one of these soldiers should be present in court to prefer the charge—it was made by two police constables. Luckily for this particular woman, she was able to bring a lady friend to vouch for her respectability, so that the magistrate declared that he did not think that the case was established. This woman, however, had the extreme annoyance of being brought into a police-court on a very unpleasant charge, and we submit that if she had happened to be friendless and unknown in London she might now have been spending some time in Holloway. Protection is needed for women from the police in London.

Government Butter.

Our butter ration per week is somewhat meagre, and, though we do not complain of the quality, we should like it good. But this cannot be said of it. The Bermondsey Borough Council recently prosecuted a retailer for selling butter which contained too much water. The magistrate received a letter from the Butter and Cheese Import Committee, which is a department of the Ministry of Food, asking that the prosecution be withdrawn, as "this is Government butter, and sold in good faith by retailers as such." We confess to a sympathy with the retailer, who was led into evil ways by the Government, and suggest that in common fairness the Ministry of Food ought to pay the fine; but the fact that a Government department actually encourages the sale of adulterated butter is surely a scandal.

Visible Means of Support.

A certain magistrate had the reputation of being very hard on vagrants. One of these came before him charged with loitering, and after he had pleaded guilty the magistrate put some questions to him, which he answered readily.

"Have you any visible means of support?"

"Yes, your Worship," replied Joe, as quick as lightning. Then, turning to where he perceived his wife in the audience, "Stand up, Mary, so that his Worship can see you."

—*Lite and Labour.*

MISS DOUGLAS PENNANT.

On March 13, when members of the House of Commons were discussing the Air Estimates, Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck raised the question of Miss Douglas Pennant's summary dismissal from the headship of the Women's Royal Air Force. Lord Henry stated that Miss Pennant was no untried person. She had had a long and distinguished career of public service, and her efficiency and capacity as an Insurance Commissioner had won for her the affection and esteem of the whole of the people of Wales. On April 22 she was invited to become head of the Women's Royal Air Force, and she only consented if she might have an opportunity of looking round for a month. She found things most unsatisfactory, and was refused all information as to the Service over which she was supposed to preside. She went to the Master-General of Personnel and told him she could not possibly accept the post unless she had his support. Sir Godfrey Paine promised her his support, and said she was to have the sole command of the Women's Air Force and at all times to have access to himself. Then she accepted the post. Soon after that she was asked to promote five most unsuitable and inexperienced women to high and responsible positions, but she refused to do so until they had proved their worth. Lord Weir upheld her decision, but this caused great discontent and animosity amongst a certain clique, and her position became impossible. Instructions were issued in her name without her knowledge, and telephone messages were sent in her name of which she had not the slightest knowledge. She went to Sir Godfrey Paine and told him that unless a certain officer at the head of the men's department was dismissed she could not possibly carry on her work. This officer was superseded, and for a time everything went smoothly and the Service made great progress. Sir Godfrey Paine, however, took up a position in France, and General Brancker took his place. He had not been in office more than three days, and had hardly had time to see whether Miss Pennant was efficient or not, when he sent for her and dismissed her on the spot. Subsequently Miss Pennant saw the Prime Minister, and he ordered an inquiry. He asked Mr. Harnsworth, the Member for Luton, to investigate the matter, and this was done. The results of that inquiry had not been published, and they were asked for in the House by Sir Owen Thomas. The Prime Minister had further promised a judicial inquiry, but Lord Weir intervened and the inquiry was stopped. Sir David Davies, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Harold Smith, Mr. Hinds, Sir Frederick Banbury, and the Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas all pressed for an inquiry into this matter, but it was definitely refused by Mr. Churchill unless definite charges of malice and corruption were brought against persons who took real responsibility for Miss Pennant's supersession.

We certainly hope that neither Miss Pennant nor her supporters in the House will allow the matter to rest there, but that further steps will be taken to secure full publicity to the conditions prevailing in the women's camps when Miss Pennant was called in to take charge of them.

A WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Miss Margery Fry, of Birmingham, and Mrs. Corbett Ashby, who contested one of the divisions of that city at the last General Election, are to represent British interests on an advisory international women's committee which is to sit in Paris during the conclusion of the Peace Conference. The committee will deal with questions of special interest to women, such as conditions of labour, marriage laws, etc.

THE HEALTH BILL.
Committee Stage.

Following the new Rules of Procedure, so gaily passed by the new House of Commons, the Committee stage of a Bill, which often completely remodels it, now takes place not on the floor of the House of Commons, but upstairs before a select number of M.P.s. This is a dangerous and undemocratic innovation. A further evil of this system is that the Committees sit whilst the House itself is sitting, compelling Committee members either to neglect their Committee work or to leave their constituents unrepresented in the House.

Standing Committee A, which undertakes the Ministry of Health Bill, consists of 76 members, under the chairmanship of Sir Archibald Williamson, and will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 to 1 and from 4 to 6. The proceedings are open to the public, and we hope as many as possible of our members will make a point of attending to watch what goes on.

The Bill was introduced on March 13.

MAJOR McMICKING endeavoured to limit the power of the Health Minister to the co-ordination and carrying out of health measures already in existence. He thought the Bill dangerous as it stood, because it seemed "very difficult to set any limit to the powers of the Ministry."

MAJOR HILLS inquired whether the Bill empowered the Health Minister to issue regulations such as 40D.

MAJOR ASTOR (the Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board) admitted that the Bill was very loosely drafted, and could be given a variety of meanings. The Bill was intended merely to leave the law as it stood, whilst collecting into one department the health powers of the twenty or so different bodies.

The Health Minister had no power whatever of imposing such a Regulation as a universal compulsory 40D.

The Committee then agreed to insert words limiting the duties of the Minister to powers transferred to him by or "in pursuance of this Act." These last words, taken in conjunction with the later Clause 4 of the Bill, with its medley of possible Orders in Council, seems still to offer a loophole to some future enterprising and autocratic Health Minister.

MR. STEWART moved an amendment to enforce the notification of venereal disease. "We should help an unfortunate brother or sister to the best of our ability if they had the misfortune to fall by the way." He would like to see a "sufferers' friend"—a Government official or Department confidant for the diseased. The functions of this confidant were left in obscurity, as were the details of cure by notification, and it is very noticeable that no other voice in the House, elected by women and men, was raised in favour of notification.

DR. ADDISON stated that the Local Government Board already had powers for compulsory notification, but at the present time the need was for a sufficient number of early treatment centres. General compulsory notification would deter persons from seeking treatment. There were about 140 centres; he needed 1,000.

Certain indications during the debate point to the probability that the Local Government Board, and the Committee appointed by it in conjunction with the War Office, Admiralty, Air Ministry, and other persons, are still turning over in their minds the introduction of some piecemeal scheme of notification. E. K.

Miss A. Maude Royden preaches at the City Temple, Holborn-viaduct, next Sunday (23rd), at the 6.30 service. Subject, "Chastity."

Women's Freedom League.

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

Friday, March 21.—Golder's Green Branch Dance, at Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute (nearest station, Golder's Green Tube), 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Tickets 2s. 6d. (including refreshments), from Miss Dickenson, 59, Ashbourne-avenue, Hendon, N.W. 4.

Wednesday, March 26.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Raleigh. Subject: "Usurpation: How Men Took Women's Work." Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café 6d. each.

Friday, March 28.—Mid-London Branch Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 7 p.m., to consider conference agenda.

Saturday, March 29.—White Elephant and Jumble Sale, Minerva Café, 2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 1.—Clapham Branch Meeting, 113 West-side, Clapham Common (by kind permission of Mrs. Sutcliffe), 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 2.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speaker: Lady Wolsey. Subject: "Our American Cousins."

Friday, April 4.—National Executive Committee Meeting, 144, High Holborn.

Saturday, April 5th.—Women's Freedom League Annual Conference, Caxton Hall, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, April 9.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. A. M. Krougliakoff (member of Petrograd Bar, Russia), on "Russia and the League of Nations."

Saturday, April 12.—Dance arranged by Golder's Green Branch, at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, Golder's Green, 7-11 p.m. Tickets 2s. 6d.

PROVINCES.

Wednesday, March 26.—Portsmouth. Afternoon Whist Drive, Unitarian Schoolroom, High-street, at 3 o'clock. Tickets, 1s. each.

Hastings.—Drawing Room Meeting, 1, St. Paul's-place, St. Leonards, 3.30 p.m. Hostess: Mrs. Darent Harrison.

Wednesday, April 2.—Middlesbrough. Café Chantant and Sale, Suffrage Club, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

Hastings.—Speakers' Class, 51, Marina, 3 p.m. Hostess: Mrs. Jowers.

Ashford.—Speakers' and Debating Class, Glengarriff, Albert-road, 7 p.m. Subject: "Bolshevism: What is It?"

Portsmouth.—Public Meeting, 2, Kent-road, 3.15 p.m. Speaker: Councillor Miss Edmonds. Subject: "Municipal Matters." Chair: Miss Maynard. Portsmouth members only, meeting 5 p.m. Business: To instruct the delegates how to vote at the annual Conference.

Monday, April 7.—Westcliff Branch Meeting, at the Labour Hall, 6, Broadway Market, Southend, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. M. W. Nevinson. Subject: "Women and the Law."

BRANCH NOTE.

Clapham. A meeting of Clapham Branch members was held on Tuesday, March 11, at 113, West-side, by kind permission of Mrs. Sutcliffe. Mrs. Tizard was voted to the chair. A resolution congratulating the women elected to the London and Middlesex County Councils was passed with acclamation, the branch expressing its greatest possible pleasure at Mrs. How Martyn's success. Amendments were framed to resolutions for the forthcoming Conference agenda, and nominations were made for the hon. treasurer and the members of the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League.

A SUFFRAGE SOUVENIR AND JUMBLE SALE

At 5, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI,

On Saturday, March 22nd, at 3 p.m.

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The Ministry of Health.

To the Editor of THE VOTE.

SIR,—Amidst the acclamation with which the Ministry of Health Bill is received I should like to point out to progressive women that all is not gold that glitters. There is a saying that you should not look a gift horse in the mouth, and it is abundantly comprehensible that the thinking women of England should welcome with enthusiasm a Bill which promises reform in so many important directions; nevertheless, I maintain that the mouth of this particular horse requires careful scrutiny. And it is the women most interested in the Bill, the reformers who ardently desire reforms long overdue, who must carry out the scrutiny; else will it not be done at all, and we shall be at the mercy of a medical autocracy before we know where we are. For this is the danger; an autocracy which overrides the liberty of the subject.

Of improved housing there cannot be too much; of improved sanitary conditions there cannot be too much; all that makes for cleanliness, for pure food, for decency, morality, beauty—everything, in fact, which makes for health conditions—cannot be too ardently supported or too faithfully furthered. But anything in the direction of giving plenary powers to doctors, anything in the direction of compulsory obedience to their decess, should be strenuously resisted by every woman who stands for freedom, whether within or without the Freedom League. I have no desire or intention either to attack or to disparage doctors, but I do wish strongly to emphasise my contention that the power to enforce inoculation or any other preventive or remedial measure which is in, or may come into, vogue, is a power which should be entrusted to no beings below the level of omniscience.

We have had religious despotism and have fought for religious liberty; we have had political despotism and have fought for political liberty; now that we may be saddled with medical despotism, let us have the foresight to fight it before it becomes a fact. There are millions of people who believe in inoculation, in vaccination, in vaccines, serums, and every prophylactic and remedy which comes along. Let them act upon their belief, but to make compulsory methods and remedies to which a large proportion of the population object would be Prussianism of the worst brand.

It is against compulsion that I protest, for compulsion is the twin brother of tyranny. It is for liberty I plead, of conscience, of opinion, of conduct; since reform, whether in the domain of health or of anything else, can never be radical, can never be true, unless it marches hand in hand with freedom. And I do earnestly beg the thinking women, the progressive women, the women who care for reform, to watch very closely this Bill and its provisions, and to use the political power they have just gained to safeguard public liberty.

G. COLMORE.

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

The report of the fourth complete year of the Settlement's work is in the printer's hands, and will be sent out shortly to subscribers and friends. From 150 to 200 children have been supplied daily with hot penny dinners throughout the year, the Guest House has received 22 for the period of their mothers' illness, and an average of 18 nursing mothers and babies have had milk each morning from the Milk Depot. Daily helpers are still urgently needed; also a third resident. The breaking-up of the Cook's Ground, Chelsea, branch of the Children's Happy Evenings Association, has brought us a splendid gift of toys and games through Miss A. Ashbee, hon. secretary of the branch. There is no Play Club yet in connection with the local schools, and we are starting an informal one this week on the strength of these toys, and should be glad of offers of help to entertain the children. The best hour is from 5 to 6.30. There are dolls, painting outfits, tea things, puzzles, and games galore, but the children will want supervision while playing with them. KATHLEEN HOLMES.

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FRIDAY,
MARCH 21,
1919.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

The address last Wednesday afternoon on "Strikes and the Alternative," by Miss G. Dyce Sharp, was of special interest. Miss Sharp pointed out that money was only a symbol, and that the power to command goods was real wealth. Wages was that part of what a man produced which went back to him. It had been said by an authority that an agricultural labourer was worth £250 a year, but the agricultural labourer did not get that amount because other people owned the land on which he worked. The whole difficulty was land monopoly, and this land monopoly had a direct bearing on strikes, which were, generally speaking, of three kinds: (1) Sectional strikes due to a special injustice to a person or persons, or to bad conditions; (2) strikes for a rise in wages; and (3) strikes for shorter hours, at the back of which was generally the fear of unemployment. Miss Sharp maintained that because a small number of people owned all the land and that the other people desired to live, and were therefore prepared to accept almost any conditions was the reason why wages always tended to a mere subsistence level. Even when wages appeared to rise they went back to the monopolists in high prices, so that if strikes to raise wages were successful they would only prove to be of temporary benefit, and were of no permanent good. Strikes which were successful in gaining shorter hours resulted in more people securing wages and a larger amount of cash being spent on commodities; but they also brought about keener competition and a rise in prices. The fact was that unemployment was an actual benefit to employers and land monopolists. It was cheaper for employers to have unemployment and to keep a permanent margin of it. The speaker said that we should never get rid of unemployment or the probability of strikes so long as raw materials remained in the hands of a few men. The only alternative to strikes would be to break the land monopoly, and get rid of the ownership of the land by a few people. This could be done by the taxation of land, which would lead ultimately to the nationalisation of land. By this means the value of the land would go back to the community and not to the landlords.

An interesting discussion followed this address, the chair being taken by Miss F. A. Underwood.

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British Dominion Women Citizens' Union.

The next bi-monthly luncheon of the members and friends of this Union will be held at the Georgian Restaurant, 43, Chandos-street, Charing Cross, on Monday, March 24, at 12.45 for 1 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Jessie Murray. Subject: "A New Profession." Chair: Mrs. Russell Reid (Canada). Tickets, 2s. 6d. each, from Miss D. Pethick, hon. treasurer, B.D.W.C.U., 39, Meadway-court, N.W. 4. Early application greatly facilitates arrangements. Members are asked to make these gatherings known, especially among friends from overseas.

The "Old Vic"

The Royal Victoria Hall, S.E. 1.

As a result of the ballot taken among "Vic" patrons, the following plays have been chosen for the Shakespeare Birthday Festival:—*Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. The Shakespeare Festival will last from April 19 to May 9, and there is every reason to believe it will be as successful as the one held at Christmas-time.

There will be an evening performance to-night (Friday) of *Julius Caesar*. To-morrow afternoon (Saturday) there will be a performance of the *Lily of Killarney*, beginning at 2.30, and at 7.30 Balfe's popular opera, *The Bohemian Girl*, will be presented.

London Branches Council.

The meeting which was to have been arranged by the London Branches Council for Saturday, March 22, has been postponed.

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