

THE VOTE,
APRIL 11, 1919.
ONE PENNY.

Twelfth Annual Conference Report.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 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.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

"It will be the duty of the New Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women."

NO SHIRKING !

ELECTION MANIFESTO signed by
MR. LLOYD GEORGE, Prime Minister. **MR. BONAR LAW**, Chancellor of the Exchequer

THE WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION BILL.

We congratulate the Labour Party on securing the Second Reading of this Bill last Friday, the provisions of which were as follows:—

1. A woman shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from holding any civil or judicial office or place of profit or trust under His Majesty, his heirs and successors or under any authority or body, corporate or incorporate, deriving powers directly or indirectly from any Act of Parliament, Order in Council, charter or franchise whatsoever.

2. Any special franchises conferred upon women by the Representation of the People Act, 1918, notwithstanding, a woman shall have and may exercise under that Act all such franchises as are therein conferred upon men which she would have been entitled to have and to exercise if she were a man, and in that Act, save where the context otherwise requires, the word "man" shall include "woman": Provided that where a woman by reason of this section has conferred upon her any franchise now conferred only upon men, any special franchise now conferred upon her as a woman which does not now extend to men shall to that extent cease and determine.

3.—(1) A woman shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from sitting and voting and receiving a writ of summons to attend in the House of Lords if a peeress in her own right.

(2) It shall be lawful for a woman, being a peeress of Scotland or Ireland in her own right, to vote at the elections of representative Peers of Scotland or Ireland respectively and to be an elected representative of the peerage of Scotland or Ireland, and as such to sit and vote and receive a writ of summons to attend in the House of Lords.

4. This Act may be cited as the Women's Emancipation Act, 1919.

In moving the Second Reading, Mr. ADAMSON declared that this Bill would, if placed on the Statute

Book, give in a considerable degree effect to the political and legal equality of men and women, and, in his opinion, it was the duty of the House to take the steps which were necessary for removing the barriers which still stood in the way of the women-folk of the country.

Fulfil the Election Promise!

In seconding the motion, Mr. LUNN reminded Members that every party in the House was sent there last December to deal definitely with this question, and, referring to the manifesto of the Coalition Party, signed by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House, which stated that "it will be the duty of the new Government to remove all existing inequalities as between men and women," pertinently inquired why no reference was made to women's emancipation in the King's Speech. He wanted to see established the right of women to any civil or judicial position, and pointed out that, although there were thousands of women in the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, and also in Government offices at the present time, yet the highest positions in these Departments were refused to women. Mr. Lunn was convinced that, when women had the same opportunities of education and recognition as men, they would qualify for the highest positions in the State; and asked that, whilst the country was being transformed in many ways, women should be given equal rights with men so that they might have an equal say in what should be done.

No Logical Excuse for Postponement.

CAPTAIN WATSON, in supporting the Second Reading, pointed out that it was possible by the laws of this country for a girl to contract a valid marriage at the age of twelve, whilst a boy must wait until he is fourteen before he could do so. It was possible under the Infant Settlements Act of 1815 for a girl of seventeen, with the consent of the Court, in contemplation of marriage, to make a valid settlement of her real and personal property, whilst a man must wait until he is twenty before he could do that. Surely, then, contended the hon. and gallant Member, there was no valid and logical excuse for postponing the age at which a woman could vote until nine years later than that at which a man was able to exercise that important function!

MAJOR O'NEILL made an excellent speech in favour of women's emancipation, but, so far as an extension of the franchise to women was concerned, pleaded, "I do not think the time is now. . . . I think we must go into these matters cautiously. This Bill has come too soon after the enfranchisement of women. . . . Therefore, personally, I shall abstain from voting."

MR. GEORGE THORNE was of opinion that there never was a time when the co-operation of women in the interests of the nation as a whole was so much needed as at the present time, and he could not but see that the nation had, by limiting the power of women, deprived itself of some of the keenest brains in the country—of the assistance of some of the most intellectual women who ought to be in a position to co-operate with men in working out the country's salvation. He therefore gave the Bill his hearty support.

SIR RYLAND ADKINS said that if he had had Mr. Adamson's good fortune in the ballot he would also have brought in a Bill to remove the disabilities of women. In many respects it would have been a wider Bill than the one being discussed by the House. He had the same ideal of citizenship as his right hon. friend, and desired that ideal to be approached at the earliest opportunity. "But ——" Well, he had been a member of Mr. Speaker's Conference, and felt absolutely pledged to maintain the so-called compromise of that conference. He did not proceed to tell the House exactly why that compromise should rival the unchangeableness of the Laws of the Medes and Persians, but in support of his position quoted the following lines, which which our readers may possibly be familiar:—

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more!"

Woman of 21 Better Voter than a Man.

CAPTAIN ALBERT SMITH explained that the finding of Mr. Speaker's Conference was a justification for a trial being given to women in the matter of the franchise. He thought that the average woman of twenty-one was more capable of exercising a vote in a rational and common-sense way than the average man at twenty-one, and pleaded that time should be taken by the forelock and that every support should be given to this Bill.

MR. MACMASTER, who had also been a member of Mr. Speaker's Conference, pointed out that since the findings of that Conference there had been a General Election, and he saw no reason whatever against extending the parliamentary vote to women of twenty-one and upwards. He considered that this concession to women was right, and, further, that, as women were the best supporters of law and order in any community, their influence should be added in support of law and order.

MR. C. WHITE, after reminding the Government of its pledges given at the General Election to secure equality of women with men, spoke strongly in support of the Bill. Men had been given the vote at twenty-one, and women of twenty-one had been

given the right to a seat and a vote in the House of Commons. Why should women be given the opportunity to sit and promote legislation in the House, and not the vote to send someone else there?

MR. W. COOTE asked his hon. friends who were pressing this Bill whether it was not better to hasten slowly in the matter, and was of opinion that, until the trade unions recognised that women were on equal terms with men in industry, the Bill was premature. He thought the womenfolk would tell Members to get on with their great schemes of reconstruction and not waste time over discussing an extension of the franchise to women. He did not quote poetry in support of his arguments, but explained to weary Members that they looked upon women not as their equals, but as their guardian angels, as above them in all that was pure and noble and holy! He was kind enough to record his appreciation of the manner in which women behaved themselves during the last election, and concluded his contribution to the debate thus: "So, while I vote for everything that will make for the political amelioration of women, I regret that I cannot vote for this Bill!"

A Breach of Promise Case!

SIR ROBERT NEWMAN said that our great fault in the past was that we had gone too slowly, and thought that if he voted against the Bill he would deserve to be run in for breach of promise. He was in favour of peeresses in their own right taking a seat in the House of Lords, and understood that it was quite a fit place for a lady to sit in. All his life he had gone on the principle that the golden rule was to trust the people of this country, and when he spoke of the country he spoke not only of the men, but also of the women.

SIR ALFRED YEO said that after a lifetime of work spent with women on public boards he had yet to learn that they were not worthy of the highest honours that the State could confer upon them; and he believed that the day had come when women had earned by every known way in the history of this country their right not only to sit in that House, but to occupy any position co-equally with men, and to have all the rights enjoyed by the male sex.

The Pig and the Trotters.

COMMANDER BELLAIRS was rather disgruntled because the Bill had nothing to say about women in industry—for, after all, should that not be the Labour Party's concern more certainly than the grievances of women in mere governmental or professional affairs? He declared: "It is not a generous Bill to the women, and it reminds me of the monumental generosity of the person who stole a pig and gave the trotters to the poor." So it happened that Commander Bellairs did not record a vote either for or against the Bill.

MAJOR ENTWISTLE urged the Government not only to give opportunities for the Bill to pass its Second Reading, but to take up the matter themselves and make the Bill more comprehensive.

MR. CARTER, in supporting the Bill, also referred to trade unions. He considered that "the door of the trade unions of this country ought to be open to every woman willing to enter into a trade organisation."

LIEUT.-COL. GUINNESS, although he used to oppose woman's suffrage on general grounds, felt that, once the principle had been conceded, it was impracticable to resist its extension. He also was troubled about passing the Bill at the present time, but voted for it in the division.

MR. ROBERT YOUNG wanted to see as many women as possible go back into their homes and not be compelled through economic pressure to work in factories when there were children to be looked after. He supported the Bill.

MR. HUGH EDWARDS considered that the Bill was just in principle, but explained that what was just in principle was not always expedient in practice, and urged the deletion of Clause 2.

MR. CAMPBELL also wanted Clause 2 deleted, and reminded the House that there was a body of people in the country which was still opposed to women's suffrage.

MR. LYNN supported the Bill because women suffered from disabilities, and it was only right to remove those disabilities.

MAJOR HILLS, in supporting the Bill, expressed the hope that women in industry would be accorded the same equality with men as it was proposed by the Bill to give to women in political, judicial, and administrative spheres. He also asked the Government for an assurance in regard to facilities for the Bills to open the legal profession to women.

CAPTAIN LOSEBY supported the Bill, and contended that, "with the complete emancipation of women, with every barrier broken down for them in the political world, industrial emancipation must eventually follow."

SIR J. D. REES supported the Bill, but complained that the Bill made no provision for admitting women into trade unions.

MR. CAPE supported the Bill.

MR. D. WILSON feared that if Clause 2 were retained the country would at an early date be plunged into another General Election.

With the fine speech made by Captain Elliot in support of this Bill we will deal next week.

DR. ADDISON, in replying on behalf of the support of this Bill we will deal with next week.

already being dealt with in order to redeem the pledges given at the General Election, and that the Government could not undertake to extend the franchise to women of less than thirty years of age. The Second Reading could only be taken on that understanding. There had been no justification made out for an alteration, so soon, of the franchise laws. He recognised that Clauses 1, 3, and 4 were certainly only in line with the general pledges given by the Government at the General Election. The Home Secretary had given a pledge for Clause 2, but the President of the Local Government Board disowned it on the part of the Government. So it may happen that the other clauses will pass into law; but there is no certainty about this at the present moment. We fear that Dr. Addison is tinged with the old taint of official Liberalism in regard to votes for women. Women who have votes must still press for votes for women on the same terms as they are granted to men, and not be daunted by the official idea that it is "never the time and the place and the loved one all together"! F. A. U.

THE NEED FOR WOMEN MAGISTRATES.

After years of agitation on the part of the Women's Freedom League the question of women magistrates has been raised and discussed in the House of Commons. At question time, Tuesday, April 1,

MR. CLOUGH asked the Prime Minister whether the Government has yet considered the appointment of women magistrates; and, if not, whether they will do so?

MR. BONAR LAW: This question has not yet been considered by the Government.

MR. RENDALL: Is it going to be considered by the Government, and, if so, when?

MR. BONAR LAW: I cannot say anything about when. I suppose it will have to be considered some day.

Apparently the Government needs a little pressure on this matter; but during the Second Reading debate on the Women's Emancipation Bill last Friday several Members of the House of Commons realised the necessity of women being appointed to the Magistrates' Bench. Mr. Lunn said he was convinced that women as well as men ought to be on that Bench, for there were delicate questions of sex that came before Benches in which a woman's presence would be very useful. Major O'Neill could not see logically why a woman should not be a Magistrate. In cases affecting children, as well as in sexual questions, he thought that women had far better means of judgment and far greater powers for coming to a right decision than any man could possibly have under any circumstances. Sir J. D. Rees asked how it was possible to keep women from being members of the Magisterial Bench when once they had been admitted to Parliament? He thought that women on the Bench might not be so anxious to send people to prison at the expense of the rates and the taxpayers!

We may congratulate ourselves and the Members of Parliament that the question of women Magistrates has been ventilated in the House of Commons, and we hope that in the securing of this reform the House will hasten quickly and convince Mr. Bonar Law that the "some day" which he prophesies for the consideration of this matter must be in the immediate future.

WOMEN AND LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES.**Great Successes of Women.**

Our warmest congratulations to Miss Margaret Hodge, who headed the poll for the Hendon Urban District Council (Hampstead Garden Suburb); also to Mrs. Bannister, who gained the next place.

Also to Miss Tooke, who was elected for the Gateshead Board of Guardians, and to Miss Munro, who is now a parish councillor for Thatcham.

Mrs. Hargrave won a seat at Golder's Green.

Miss Vance, the blind candidate who stood in the interests of the blind, headed the poll as a Poor Law Guardian in St. Pancras, Ward 3.

Nine women, all Independents, have been elected as Guardians at Lewisham. Two sisters tied as head of the poll at Halstead.

Montgomery Boroughs.

Mrs. How Martyn visited Newtown on April 3 and spoke at a largely attended meeting in support of the candidature of Mrs. Williams and Miss Hamer. Miss Alix M. Clark presided, and excellent speeches were made by the candidates, and great enthusiasm prevailed. It is to be regretted that Newtown have not elected the women candidates on their Urban District Council. However, defeat is only the clarion call to go forward, and for the good of our town we hope the time is not far distant when an equal number of women with men will sit on the Council.

As we go to press the list is incomplete.

Volunteers Wanted!

Readers of THE VOTE are wanted to attend House of Commons debates and to report to headquarters on their impressions and also on the average attendance of Members.

Woman Secretary to Paper Inquiry Committee.

The committee of inquiry into the paper industry, consisting of nineteen men, has a woman secretary, Mrs. E. S. Francis, of the Paper Control Department, 23, Buckingham-gate, S.W.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, April 11th, 1919.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—
To the Editor—on all editorial matters.
To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.
To the Secretary—on all other business, including VOTE orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.
Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.
Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

EDITORIAL.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATE.

At Home and Abroad ... post free, 8/6 per annum

TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

The Twelfth Annual Conference of the Women's Freedom League was held at Caxton Hall last Saturday. The following branches sent delegates:—Clapham, Miss Underwood; Golder's Green, Miss Hodge and Mrs. Pierotti; Hackney, Mrs. Mustard; Hampstead, Miss Pearce; Herne Hill and Norwood, Miss Spriggs; Mid-London, Mrs. Tritton; Bournemouth, Mrs. Hull; Ipswich, Mrs. Morgan; Manchester, Miss G. McDonald; Middlesbrough, Mrs. Walker; Nottingham, Miss Gunston; Portsmouth, Mrs. Speck; Westcliff-on-Sea, Miss Clarke; Dundee and Edinburgh, Miss Gibson; Glasgow, Miss Buntin; Montgomery Boroughs, Miss Alix M. Clark.

To the great regret of all present Mrs. Despard was not well enough to take the chair, but she came in during the morning to give a delightful address of welcome to the delegates and to wish every success to the work of the Women's Freedom League throughout the coming year. Mrs. Schofield Coates presided at the Conference in Mrs. Despard's stead, and in her opening address reminded the delegates that the opportunities for the work of the Women's Freedom League were innumerable, and that the need of that work was never so great as at the present time.

The reports of the Treasury, of the Secretariat and Propaganda, Political, Literature and VOTE Departments, and of the Hon. Organising Secretary for the year were adopted by the Conference, and the best thanks of the delegates given to those responsible for them.

The following urgency resolutions proposed by the National Executive Committee were passed unanimously:—

(1) In view of the parliamentary situation with regard to the Bill for opening the legal profession to women, "Barriers and Solicitors (Qualifications of Women) Bill," the Women's Freedom League in Conference earnestly requests that this be made a Government measure, that a similar Bill be framed to apply to Scotland, and that both be passed into law without delay.

(2) That this Conference calls upon the Government to remove the present anomaly in Income-tax Law by which Income-tax is charged upon the joint incomes of husband and wife instead of upon their separate incomes as in the case of unmarried people; and urges that this anomaly be removed before the introduction of the Budget.

Further, this Conference protests against the inclusion of only one woman on the Income-tax Commission, and calls upon the Government to invite women's organisations to appoint representatives.

(3) That this Conference protests against any efforts, national or international, to limit the opportunities of women in the fields of labour under the name of protection.

The following urgency resolutions, proposed by Golder's Green Branch, were passed after a discussion by a majority of the delegates present:—

That this Conference of the Women's Freedom League protests strongly to the Allied Conference in Paris against the continued starvation of women and children in Russia and Central Europe, and demands in the name of humanity the immediate raising of the blockade.

That the Women's Freedom League identifies itself with the demand for the raising of the blockade and for the immediate importation of food to the women and children of the starving countries of Europe.

All these urgency resolutions have been sent to the Prime Minister and the different Government Departments whose business it will be to deal with them.

Conference Agenda.

In view of Dr. Addison's statement in the House of Commons last Friday, that the Government could not undertake to support the clause in the Women's Emancipation Bill which would extend the parliamentary vote to women under thirty years of age, it is interesting to record that the first resolution on the Women's Freedom League Conference Agenda, and which was passed unanimously by delegates from our branches in England, Scotland, and Wales, was

"That the first object of the Women's Freedom League continues to be the securing of equal Voting rights for men and women."

Other resolutions passed unanimously were:—
"That the Women's Freedom League continue as a non-party organisation, and continue actively to press for equal opportunities, awards, and responsibilities for women with men throughout all branches of our national life."

"That in the event of the Ministry of Health being formed, the Women's Freedom League shall urge in every possible way that the rights and liberties of women must be safeguarded by the appointment of an equal number of women with men in control of all its departments, and that it continue to press for a woman Minister of Health."

"That Members of Parliament be urged to meet their constituents at least once every six months for discussion of the work done by Parliament."

"That the Society of Architects be urged to make provision for women members."

"That, with a view to lessening prostitution, the Women's Freedom League urge that the Government establish a minimum living wage, consonant with the prevailing cost of living, in all women's industries."

"That the Government provide employment for women dismissed from national factories, those factories to be retained and run by the Government."

"That, in view of the urgent need for homes for the people, local authorities should be empowered and urged to acquire undeveloped or unused land, and unoccupied premises within or near the boundaries of towns so as to have under their control an abundance of cheap land for housing and town planning purposes, and that such land should be purchased at agricultural value."

The following resolutions were passed, but not unanimously:—

"That the Women's Freedom League run a woman parliamentary candidate at the next General Election, and support women candidates whose ideals and principles are in accordance with the policy of the Women's Freedom League."

"That the Women's Freedom League become active in the promotion of trade unionism among women workers, as the necessary first measure for demanding and obtaining an improvement in their working conditions, and that women be urged to seek entrance into men's trade unions on equal terms."

"That in the interest of national purity and in view of the disastrous effects upon the nation of pros-

titution and venereal disease, this Conference calls upon the Government to issue a public official statement that immorality is unnecessary and wrong, and to carry out this principle in all its actions."

"That this Conference considers an eight-hour day desirable, as being sufficiently long, and as a means of reducing unemployment. It further considers that shorter hours are necessary for women as well as for men."

"That this Conference is of opinion that the Women's Freedom League should work with other societies to press for local option."

Among the resolutions lost was one committing the Women's Freedom League to work for a scheme of Endowment of Motherhood, or for Pensions for Children.

The members elected to the National Executive Committee were:—Dr. Elizabeth Knight (hon. treasurer), Miss A. M. Clark, Mrs. Schofield Coates, Miss D. Evans, Miss J. Gibson, Miss Hodge, Mrs. Metge, Miss Munro, Mrs. Mustard, Miss M. I. Neal, Miss Helena Normanton, Mrs. Pierotti, and Mrs. Whetton.

At a meeting of this Committee, held at the close of the Conference proceedings, Miss F. A. Underwood was appointed General Secretary, and the members of the staff were confirmed in office. It was decided to leave over the appointments of Hon. Organising Secretary and the Hon. Heads of our Literature and VOTE Sales Departments until the next meeting of the Committee.

During the Conference proceedings a warm message of sympathy was sent to Miss Anna Munro, who had met with an accident the previous day, and was unable to attend the Conference. The delegates present also sent cordial greetings to Miss A. A. Smith, the Editor of THE VOTE, expressing deep sympathy with her in her recent illness, but rejoicing that she was well on her way to recovery, and that she had resumed her work for our paper. They also thanked Mrs. E. M. N. Clark very warmly for her kindness in editing THE VOTE during the last eight weeks.

At the close of the Conference a very hearty vote of thanks was given to Mrs. Schofield Coates for her chairmanship, and to the members of the National Executive Committee who held office throughout the past year.

Reception to Women's Freedom League and Friends.

A reception was held in the Minerva Café last Sunday afternoon to delegates to the Conference and their friends. Everyone present enjoyed the opportunity of a chat with fellow members; and after tea informal speeches were made by Mrs. Mustard, Miss E. J. Read, Miss Gunston, Miss Ballard Dawson, Miss Buntin, Mrs. Van Raalte, Miss Van Raalte, and Miss F. A. Underwood, under the kindly chairmanship of Mrs. Schofield Coates.

RE-ADJUSTMENT AND SPRING-CLEANING.

With the springtime come thoughts of sunshine and the longing for country joys, rest and change. Fresh air and change are just as necessary for the body as spring-cleaning is for the house, and the body, not being stable, as is the house, must be transported for the change and freshness it requires away from the smoke and dirt-laden town.

This spring, after the long stress and strain of war, the necessity is vastly greater, and we turn our thoughts with an insistent longing "for to seeken straunge strandes" greater than any pilgrim wending to Canterbury. Gladly we read of the manifold preparations of landladies and purveyors on the East Coast and the South, looking forward to an invasion

of visitors unknown since 1914. These excitements and pleasant visions, however, are very considerably dashed by the ominous threatenings from the railway authorities. Fortunate are those with cycle and motor, independent of the limitation of "50 per cent. increase on the fares of former years"! Their number is comparatively small, for one's "family" does not pack on to a cycle, and the large majority must have recourse to transit by train, with its present inadequate service and almost prohibitive fares. For the former difficulty doubtless there is reason enough, but against the continued imposition of the latter we do heartily protest. What could be done? Let us set our brains to work to devise some way out of the difficulty since the all-powerful "Officialdom" fails to offer any amelioration. The question of "nationalisation" is already before us, but that will not avail us for the approaching Easter holiday. Here is one suggestion, a thoroughly simple, practical one from the passenger's point of view, which could be easily carried out at once.

Reasonable amount of travel is good for tired workers; very good and indeed necessary for our young folk if they are to grow up alert and intelligent, most necessary for the older ones to save them rusting before their time! For the last two to three years we have been "rationed" and "couponed" more than we liked: why not now make use of the aggravation of "coupons" to provide an easement of this question of travel? We are all registered in full detailed record. Let each adult citizen be supplied with a book of coupons on application to the local district, or village post office, such coupons to be exchangeable at any railway station on any line of rail on payment of the required fare at reduced rate. Each book of coupons should allow, say, of 1,000 miles of travel for the year of issue at the agreed rate, say, of 1d. or even ½d. per mile, a rate well within possibility as soon as railways shall be organised for the benefit of the community, not mainly as sources of income for directors. This amount of travel should make possible sufficient change and rest for all health and educative purposes. All travel in excess of the 1,000 miles per annum should be charged at a much higher rate per mile, whatever would make the railways financially sound.

At a time of rush, e.g., Easter or summer holiday time, travellers exchanging coupons for tickets should have preference over those buying tickets at the higher rate, thus ensuring the workers and genuinely busy people getting the first choice of fresh air, change, and comfort in travelling. The habit of frequent change and perpetual movement has grown insidiously of late; should the suggested coupon system render it less easily gratified, so much the better for us all. Of course, those travelling daily to their work by rail would have season tickets at low rates, independent of the 1,000-mile ordinary travel. A similar scheme of reduced rates could well be applied to travel by sea and motor car, or even, in the dim future, to the air!

Then, with shorter hours of work yielding their greater production of output and sequent increase of leisure, these travelling facilities will be doubly welcome and give us a more abundant harvest of joy and zest in life.

JOYCE D. BERTRAM.

Lamorna, near Penzance, Cornwall.

A BOOK FOR ENFRANCHISED WOMEN. THE FEMININE IN FICTION.

(Allen and Unwin. 3s. 6d. net.) By L. A. M. PRIESTLEY (Mrs. GEO. McCracken), with a Foreword by Mrs. Despard. "The work could not have been more effectively done... the book forms a real tribute to the generally advanced and friendly tone of English Novelists."—In *Daily News* review. "A series of clever little studies."—*The Scotsman*. On Sale at Women's Freedom League Literature Dept., 144, High Holborn, W.C.

WAITING FOR PEACE.

The world waits the announcement that it is at peace. The technicalities of war, the immensity of its area, the unfathomable depth of loss and suffering which it caused, its far-reaching influence on every department of life left the democracies of the world deadened and impotent—content to leave their destinies to those who, in the main, were responsible for the general conduct and military operations of the war. At the General Election last December the demand was made that those who had "seen the war through" should be allowed to see the peace through also. This may have been a demand based upon expediency, and, if "seeing the peace through" may be regarded as a reward for services rendered, it may have been motivated by a feeling of gratitude, but it can scarcely be said to have a logical basis. The fire which burns the prairie is a useful agent to be employed in the first stages of cultivation; it will neither sow the seed nor reap the harvest. The work of demolition is entrusted to a stepladder, but he is not asked to build an enduring habitation.

To those who saw the possibility of a League of Nations it must be an everlasting regret that it was not built up in a time of peace, rather than left to be fashioned in a period overcast by clouds of the greatest cataclysm in history, when "a kind of a war" is still raging in several parts of the east of Europe, and internecine strife, famine, pestilence, and financial ruin are ravaging the lands of those who were recently our Allies as well as those of the enemy.

It cannot be matter for surprise if the proceedings of the Conference at Paris are viewed with a certain amount of apathy. Faith, hope and charity grow but indifferently in the soil of war. Honest doubt assails us all. Have we sufficient faith in human nature to believe that the nations which turn their swords into ploughshares will not be cut down by the machine-guns of more truculent foes? Are not the dreams of peace on earth too good to be true? Is it possible to forgive your enemies and to make of them partners and fellow workers in an international fellowship—a fellowship such as the world has never seen, and never could have seen until the developments of science—rapid travelling and the easy transmission of news, etc.—drew the nations of the world together and made them realise, if but faintly, their interdependence? These are the questions which lurk at the base of our consciousness. It is true that replies drafted in accordance with principles of religion and ethics might prove entirely satisfactory to those to whom the religious or ethical basis of a League of Nations is a sufficient justification for its establishment. It must, however, be confessed that religious and ethical principles do not carry very far in politics, and it is perhaps fortunate that the League is fostered by a sterner nurse—"Necessity, the mother of the world." We have all felt war to be an anachronism—that it belongs to more primitive ages of the world's history. A statement was made by a responsible speaker last week to the effect that babies were being eaten in Russia. This may easily turn out to be as unfounded a falsehood as the story of the "nationalisation" of women proved to be, but it cannot be denied that great areas which we had regarded as civilised have been hurled back into barbarism. Human progress may be "a mainly onward movement, never wholly retrograde," but at the moment it is impossible to stifle doubts as to the direction of that movement. With the exception of the United States of America, it will probably take the nations which took part in the war several decades to regain their pre-war standard of national life. It may, of course, be argued that

the loss is purely material, but those who hold this view will find it difficult to deny that mental and even moral progress must have a physical foundation. The branches of the tree may reach to the heavens, but its roots are in the earth.

Faith, hope, and charity! Who can doubt we need them to-day. But perhaps there is a still more insistent need for imagination, through which to realise the vastness of the horror, the pain and the loss which individuals, families, communities, and nations have suffered and continue to suffer through the institution of war. To realise this however faintly would be to give us the motive force to determine that the reign of law, which already prevails in individual and national affairs, must be extended to international affairs. Those who in the various countries have been responsible for the conduct of the war which ended last November have told us that it found them unprepared, that more advantage could have been taken of the discoveries of modern science, more deadly instruments of war could have been provided, and that, compared to a world conflict of the future, the catastrophe of 1914-18 would appear as the game of a child. It is true that schemes to keep the world at peace have failed in the past. The scheme of Henry of Navarre failed. The "Holy" Alliance failed. The Concert of Europe failed. Be it remembered also how often heroic attempts to reach the poles have failed, and that tragedy succeeded tragedy until at last success came. Modern science is, no doubt, an accessory of war, but its fortunes are bound up with peace and not with war. The gradual recognition of the interdependence of nations gives hope for the future, and though peace on earth may not come to-day or to-morrow, science and modern progress are tending to make its coming not only desirable, but necessary and even inevitable.

Both in a literal and in a political sense women have entered into the sphere of war. They take part in the non-combatant services, and have been assured that the war could not have been won without them. In Russia they have fought and fallen in battle. In the invaded countries they have suffered miseries which beggar description and indignities unthinkable. Whether as willing or unwilling sacrifices, they have had to offer their husbands, sons, and lovers to the god of war. If they do not supply the armies of the future in sufficient numbers they are denounced as unpatriotic.

Long years ago women moved from the restricted life of their families into the larger life of the community, and with the granting of the parliamentary vote their citizenship in the State was recognised. They have yet to move into the area of international politics. It is reported that, by an amendment to the Covenant of the League of Nations, they are to be eligible for membership of the Executive Council, the Body of Delegates, and the permanent Secretariat—the three bodies upon whom the work of the League is to devolve. Former things—the things of last year and the year before—have passed away. We are slipping back into the conditions of peace, and no longer scan the evening sky for searchlights—the only beauty of which the coming of peace bereft us. War has left its aftermath for future generations to gather, but sanity and order are regaining their sway. It is inevitable that the thoughts of men and women will be more and more directed to the task of ensuring the peace of the world. We have been accused of already forgetting the war. This may be true, and the fact may be taken not entirely as a symptom of national flippancy, but rather as a recognition of the ease with which men and women turn their backs on the monstrous abnormality of war to the normal human life which is only consistent with peace. E. M. N. C.

OUR TREASURY.
NATIONAL FUND.

Amount previously acknowledged, October, 1907, to December, 1918, £31,454 1s. 5d.

	£	s.	d.
Amount previously acknowledged	148	0	8
Special Emergency War Fund—			
"A Friend"	2	10	0
W. R. Snow, Esq.	1	0	0
Mrs. Sholl	5	0	
Mrs. Angold	3	0	
	3	18	0
White Elephant Sale—			
Portsmouth Branch	1	0	0
Miss Munro	10	0	
Mrs. Beaumont Thomas	10	0	
Miss Reeves	6	0	
Mrs. M. Anderson	5	0	
Mrs. Allen and Miss Owen	5	0	
Mrs. Tanner	2	6	
Mrs. Arthur Briggs	2	0	
Mrs. Terry	2	0	
Miss Holford	1	0	
Miss M. Seymour	1	0	
Goods sold	8	18	0
	12	2	6
Dr. Knight	5	9	5
"Taxation of Married Women"	4	8	0
Mrs. Ida J. A. Brown	4	0	0
Per Miss Alix M. Clark—			
Miss Geiler	4	0	0
Miss McCulloch	1	1	0
Miss Baldwin	10	0	
Mrs. French	10	0	
Miss Janet Heyes	10	0	
Misses Hordern	10	0	
Miss Neal	10	0	
Miss Andrews	4	0	
Mrs. Pearson	1	0	
	7	16	0
Mrs. E. M. N. Clark	3	3	0
Dr. Patch	2	2	0
Civil Service Woman Suffrage Society	1	0	0
Mrs. Sidley	1	0	0
Mrs. Evans	10	6	
Dr. A. Gibbs	5	0	
Dr. White	3	9	
Miss Sackur	3	6	
Mrs. Sproson	2	6	
Mrs. Yoxall	2	6	
Miss Sybil Pendleton	2	0	
Collections	4	13	11
Office Sales	14	2	
Sundries	2	10	0
Branches—			
Edinburgh	15	0	
Herne Hill and Norwood	15	0	
Middlesbrough	2	7	8
Westcliff	10	0	
Capitation Fees—			
Bexhill	12	6	
Bournemouth	15	0	
Clapham	8	0	
Dundee	6	0	
Edinburgh	12	6	
Golder's Green	6	0	
Hackney	15	0	
Hampstead	8	0	
Hastings	11	6	
Herne Hill and Norwood	6	0	
Ipswich	6	0	
Manchester	1	0	0
Middlesbrough	10	0	
Montgomery Boroughs	6	11	0
Nottingham	6	0	
Reading	6	0	
Rothsay	6	0	
Tufnell Park	6	0	
	£221	6	7

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Saturday, April 12.—Meeting for members and friends to discuss report on resolutions passed at Annual Conference and the immediate work of the Women's Freedom League, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Ayres Purdie. Dance arranged by the Golder's Green Branch at the Institute, Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb (nearest station Golder's Green Tube), 7-11 p.m. (Fancy Dress Optional). Tickets 2s. 6d. (including refreshments), from Miss Dickeson, 59, Ashbourne-avenue, N.W.4.

Wednesday, April 30.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C.1, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Whish. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café.

Wednesday, May 7.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m.

Thursday, May 8.—Golder's Green Branch Meeting, at 13, Temple Fortune-court, at 8.15 p.m.

Saturday, May 10.—National Executive Committee Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 10 a.m.

Tuesday, April 15.—Middlesex Education Committee Meeting, at Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., 4.15 p.m.

Wednesday, April 16.—London County Council Education Committee, County Hall, Spring Gardens, S.W., 2.30 p.m.

Thursday, May 1.—Middlesex County Council Meeting, 4.15 p.m., at Guildhall, Westminster.

PROVINCES.

Wednesday, April 16.—Portsmouth Branch Practice Debating Class at 2, Kent-road, 3.15 p.m. prompt. Subject for discussion: "State Endowment of Motherhood." Opener: Mrs. Speck.

Members' Meeting, 5 p.m. Delegates' Report of the Annual Conference.

Monday, May 12.—Westcliff Branch Meeting, at the Labour Hall, 6, Broadway Market, Southend, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans. Subject: "The House of Famine and Land Hunger."

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Wednesday, April 30.—East Boldon B.W.T.A. Public lectures afternoon and evening. Speaker: Mrs. Schofield Coates.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

On April 2 Lady Wolseley very kindly gave an address on "Our American Cousins." The speaker was an enthusiast for an "Entente cordiale" between the two countries. We had the same language and were of the same race, and would do well to appreciate and possibly emulate each other's diverse qualities. English people could do with much of the youthful energy, vigour and resource possessed in such abundance by the people of America; while they in their turn would perhaps be all the more effective for some of our conservative stability. Lady Wolseley hopes to visit America shortly, and a general desire was expressed that on her return to England she should come again and give us some account of her experiences in that country. The chair was taken by Miss F. A. Underwood.

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APRIL 11,
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THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

National Union of Teachers' Conference, Cheltenham, Easter 1919

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

We were very pleased to see the Women's Freedom League so well represented at the "At Home" at Mrs. Despard's on April 4 by several of the delegates to Conference, and to hear speeches from Mrs. Whetton and Mrs. Schofield Coates. We like to have evidence sometimes that we are a part of the League's work, and not to have to depend entirely on interest and help from outside friends, much as we value these too. Mrs. Despard acted as hostess, Mrs. Corner and Miss E. Lydall sang some beautiful songs, and Mrs. Corner conducted a most successful auction, with Miss Cole's help. We thank the fifty or sixty people who came, and hope to see them all here again. The next function will be a jumble sale on Easter Monday, for which the secretary will be glad to receive contributions. The baby's bath asked for is being provided by Miss Margaret Kennedy.

Miss A. Maude Royden will preach at the City Temple next Sunday, April 13, at the 6.30 p.m. service. Subject: "How and why we should pray."

BRANCH NOTES.

Ashford.

Mrs. Despard's visit to the Women's Club was a great event; the number of women present exceeded all our expectations, and we warmly thank everyone who helped to make the meeting such a success. We hope to have a still larger attendance at our next meeting, which will be held in April. Mrs. H. B. Irving is unable at present to fix a date for her visit, but we hope to give a warm welcome to Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett, who is no stranger to Ashford. Remember that all information about the club can be had from Mrs. J. S. Corlett, Wesley Manse, Ashford; or Miss White, Magazine House, Winchelsea.

Golder's Green.

Members and friends who attended the dances on February 7 and March 21 are reminded that the next dance will be held at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute on Saturday, April 12. At the last of this series of dances we have decided to have fancy dress optional. We anticipate an enjoyable evening. As the object of these dances is to raise funds, of which we are greatly in need, for local activities, we appeal to all friends and sympathisers to assist by taking tickets and sending contributions towards the refreshments in money or in kind.

Portsmouth.

Our monthly public meeting on April 2 was well attended, and intense interest was taken in Councillor Miss Edmonds' address on "Municipal Matters." Miss Edmonds spoke of the committees she was on, and said she thought she had been rather greedy in accepting so many. She made special reference to the Education, Asylum, Watch, and Housing Committees, which she said were absorbingly interesting. Many questions were asked and thoughtfully answered by Miss Edmonds. In introducing Miss Edmonds, Miss Maynard made a most delightful, sympathetic, and inspiring speech. The Practice Debating Class will be held on Wednesday, April 16, at 3.15, at 2, Kent-road. Mrs. Speck will open a discussion on "State Endowment of Motherhood." The usual arrangements will be made for tea, after which a report of the annual Conference will be given by our delegate.

EASTER HOLIDAYS.

The offices of the Women's Freedom League and "THE VOTE," also the Minerva Cafe and Madame Minerva, will be closed from Thursday, April 17, 5.30 p.m., until Tuesday, April 22, 9.30 a.m.

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