THE VOTE OUR ADVICE TO PARTIES!

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1927

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

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BEST WISHES

FROM

THE LEAGUE AND "THE VOTE"

FOR

A Happy Christmas

TO

EVERY MEMBER AND READER.

"DARE TO BE FREE!"

Let us all enjoy our Holiday in good cheer at our longoverdue pledge, and with resolute determination for its speedy fulfilment.

THE VOTE

The following is translated from La Française, and gives an indication of the Parliamentary position in France of the question of the enfranchisement of Frenchwomen. La Française is the paper founded by Madame Jane Misme, and now managed by Madame Brunschwieg. It says that, as already noted in a pre-vious issue of *La Française*, discussion in the Senate of the question of the enfranchisement of women cannot take place before January. The President of Council has promised to support the granting of the vote to Frenchwomen after the Budget has been dealt with. With this notable example, other friends of woman's suffrage in the Senate met together and issued a note to the Press, to the following effect :-

The feminist group in the Senate met together on December 6th, under the presidency of M. Louis Martin. They discussed the introduction of the Marraud resolution on the question, and finally decided, unanimously, on the motion of M. Henry Cheron, on the reassembly in January to press for introduction and for time for debate

On hearing of this, M. Proust, President of the Group for Woman's Suffrage in the Chamber of Deputies, called the extra-Parliamentary Committee appointed to deal with the question to a meeting on December 13th, at which all suffrage societies will, it is hoped, agree upon some definite concerted policy of action.

THAT OLD ENEMY PROTECTION.

Equal Rights reports the following Section of a Bill recently attempted in California and defeated by the work of the professional and business women of the

Section 1. Section 1 of an Act entitled "An Act limiting the hours of labour of females employed in any manufacturing, mechanical, or mercantile establishment, laundry, hotel, or restaurant, or telegraph or telephone establishment or office, or by any express or transportation company; compelling each employer in any manufacturing, mechanical, or mercantile establishment, laundry, hotel or restaurant, or other establishment employing any female to provide suitable seats for all female employees and to permit them to use such seats when they are not engaged in the active duties of their employment; and providing a penalty for failure, neglect, or refusal of the employer to comply with the provisions of this Act, and for permitting or suffering any overseer, superintendent, foreman, or other agent of any such employer to violate the provisions of this Act," approved March 22, 1911, as amended, is hereby amended so as to read as follows:

Section 1. No female shall be employed in any manufacturing, mechanical, or mercantile establishment or industry, laundry, hotel, public lodging-house, apartment house, hospital, sanatorium, relief home, or asylum, place of amusement, or restaurant, or bank, or general or professional office, insurance office, real estate office, or telegraph or telephone establishment or office, or in the operation of elevators in office buildings, or by any express or transportation company in this State, more than eight hours during any one day of twenty-four hours or more than forty-eight hours in one week. It shall be unlawful for any employer of labour to employ, cause to be employed, or permit any female employee to labour any number of hours whatever, with knowledge that such female has heretofore been employed within the same date and day of twentyfour hours in any establishment or industry and by any previous employer, for a period of time that will, combined with the period of time of employment by a previous employer, exceed eight hours; provided, that this shall not prevent the employment of any female in more than one establishment where the total number of hours worked by said employee does not exceed eight hours in any one day of twenty-four hours. If any female shall be employed in more than one such place, the total number of hours of such employment shall not exceed eight hours during any one day of twenty-four their male colleagues.

FRENCHWOMEN AND THE FRANCHISE. hours or forty-eight hours in one week. The hours of work may be so arranged as to permit the employment of females at any time so that they shall not work more than eight hours during the twenty-four hours of one day, or forty-eight hours during any one week; provided further, that the provisions of this section in relation to hours of employment shall not apply to or affect graduate nurses in hospitals, nor the harvesting, curing, canning, or drying of any variety of perishable fruit, fish, or vegetable during such periods as may be necessary to harvest, cure, can, or dry said fruit, fish, or vegetable in order to save the same from spoiling.

IS A WOMAN A PERSON?

Women in Quebec are considered wise enough to have a voice in the affairs of the whole Dominion of Canada, but not wise enough to have any say about the affairs in their own province. At the present time, the question "Is a Woman a Person?" is being discussed in Quebec. A great deal depends upon the answer. If a woman is a legal "person," there is nothing to prevent her being appointed to the Senate, to which she is at present held to be ineligible. As a person," she ought to have the Provincial vote and the right to qualify herself for any position or profession which she might choose, and to fill such position and practise such profession when qualified. Five women recently asked the Department of Justice for an inter-pretation of the word "person." Did it mean female as well as male, and the matter is being referred to the Supreme Court of Canada at their February sitting. We shall all look forward to its answer!

NATIONAL UNION of WOMEN TEACHERS.

The Annual Conference of the National Union of Women Teachers wi'l be held in the Town Hall, Chester, January 3rd to 6th. This Conference will be opened by the Mayor of Chester, and speeches will be given by the Bishop of Chester, Mrs. E. K. Paget, J.P., Canon Thomas, O.B.E., M.A., Principal of the Diocesan Men's Training College, F. J. Baxton, Esq., representing the Free Churches, Councillor Phyllis Brown, J.P., M.A., and John Morris, Esq., Chairman of the Education Committee. Mrs. Elizabeth Tidswell will be inducted as President for the coming year.

Resolutions concerning equal pay and equal opportunities will be dealt with; the hardship which is inflicted on head-teachers owing to the down-grading of their schools, and protests against the payment of salaries on average attendance; extension of the franchise; staffing and size of classes, school buildings and playing-fields, cinemas, continued education, and the raising of the school-leaving age.

THIS FREEDOM!

From Opportunity, the organ of the Federation of Women Civil Servants, we learn that this Federation has been notified by the Registrar-General that its affiliations to the following bodies must cease:-The London and National Society for Women's Service, The Six Point Group, The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, The Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations, The British Commonwealth League, and the National Council of Women. The disaffiliations are under Clause 4 of Part I of the Schedule to the Regulations under the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, 1927, which says that an approved Civil Service organisation "must not be associated directly or indirectly with any political Party organisation." The only thing for non-Party women's organisations to do, of course, is to work with renewed vigour for equal status, equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men within the Civil Service. We are sure that the societies to which the Federation of Women Civil Servants was affiliated, and the Women's Freedom League, which has no outside organisation affiliated to it, will be keener than ever to help women Civil Servants to secure this measure of equality with

IN PARLIAMENT.

Wife's Torts (Husband's Liability).

CAPT. A. Evans (U., Cardiff) asked the Home Secretary if, in view of the dissatisfaction at the state of the law respecting the liability of the husband for the wife's torts, he will consider an alteration in the law with regard to the same? SIR V. HENDERSON (Under-Secretary, Home Office): A Bill for the purpose of altering the law on this matter was introduced by the Lord Chancellor in another place in 1925, and passed through all its stages there, but, unfortunately, it was impossible to find time for it in this House in that year, and the exigencies of Parliamentary business have prevented the Government since then from proceeding with the matter. My noble Friend will give further consideration to the matter with a view to seeing whether it is possible to proceed with it in the Session of 1928.

The Price of Coal.

Mr. OLIVER (Lab., Ilkeston) asked the Secretary for Mines whether he is now in a position to make a statement respecting the recent increase in the London coal prices? COLONEL LANE FOX: The present increase of 2s. per ton in retail prices in Central London is not due to an increase in pithead prices. The explanation given by the coal merchants, who came as individuals in response to my invitation to the Coal Merchants' Federation and the Co-operative Societies, was that, in the early part of the summer, they reduced retail prices by 10s. to 11s. per ton, which was more than justified by the reduction in pit prices. This was done in an attempt to buy back domestic trade, which they felt they had lost in consequence of the installation of electric stoves, gas stoves, and oil stoves in households during the stoppage last year, and, secondly, to meet the request of the collieries that they should encourage summer trade as much as possible this year in order to keep miners employed. The public took advantage of these reduced prices to a greater extent than was expected, with the result, the merchants state, that they lost more heavily during the summer than is usual, and more heavily than they had anticipated. The merchants state: "The present advance must be taken in conjunction with the large reduction in the summer and as an endeavour to restore this section of the coal industry to an economic basis.'

Against this, it must be stated that the increase of 2s. is not universal. Two large Co-operative Societies and at least one large firm of merchants, with a few local trolly-price exceptions, have not increased prices. A comparison of the margins between pithead prices and retail prices at this period of 1924 and 1927 shows that, without the last 2s. rise, the margins in favour of the coal merchants are higher now than in 1924. In these circumstances, I am not satisfied that the 2s. per ton increase in retail prices in Central London put into force on November 29th by the majority of the merchants was justified. MR. OLIVER: In view of the opinion expressed in the answer, can the hon. and gallant Gentleman say what steps he proposes to take to see that prices are not raised? Col. Lane-Fox: The Government have no power to control retail prices. The whole of the merchants have not made this increase, and the public, if sufficiently interested in the matter, can deal with the matter effectively by refusing to pay more than the prices current before November Mr. Pethick-Lawrence (Lab., Leicester, W.): In view of the statement of the Minister that the Government have no power in this matter, will the Government consider the advisability of taking power to deal with it? COL. LANE-Fox: I think we should wait, first of all, to see whether the public is not capable of dealing with the situation.

Ashby, the President of the Women's National Liberal Federation, has been adopted, and other names mentioned are Mrs. Wintringham, Mrs. Walter Runciman, Miss Megan Lloyd George-who will stand in all probability for a Welsh constituency—and Lady Emmott.

WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT.

The Yorkshire Herald gives the following list of women of the three Parties who have already been adopted as candidates for Parliament :-

Viscountess Astor, who sits for the Sutton Division of Plymouth, will contest her constituency again at the next election, and the Duchess of Atholl, M.P., will be the Conservative candidate for Perth and Kinross. Lady Iveagh, who was returned for Southend a fortnight ago, and Mrs. Hilton Philipson, Member for Berwick-on-Tweed, will each stand; and the Hon. Mrs. Laurence Brodrick, who fought the Denbigh Division in 1922, will contest that seat again. Mrs. Pankhurst, the veteran woman suffrage leader of militant days, is working in the Whitechapel and St. George's Division of Stepney, and the Hon. Mary Pickford, a daughter of the late Lord Sterndale, will stand for a Lancashire

Other Conservative candidates are Miss M. L. K. Jones, who was defeated in the Ardwick Division of Manchester in the October, 1924, election, and will stand for Ardwick again; and Miss Irene Ward, the prospective candidate for Morpeth, Northumberland. Miss Ward, who is one of the younger Conservative women with expert knowledge of the coal industry and of north-country industrial conditions generally, travelled a great deal to study economic conditions abroad. She polled 10,500 votes at the last election against Mr. Robert Smillie, the Socialist Member.

The three women Socialist Members-Miss Margaret Bondfield, Wallsend, Northumberland; Miss Susan Lawrence, East Ham, North; and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Middlesbrough-head the Socialist Party lists. Lady Cynthia Mosley will stand for Stoke-on-Trent, and Lady Clare Annesley, an aunt of the Earl of Annesley, has been allotted to Bristol, West.

Many of the prospective candidates have had General Election experience. Dr. Ethel Bentham, who has been adopted for Islington, East, has stood in that constituency since the 1922 election. Mrs. Barbara Ayrton Gould, who contested Lambeth, North, in 1922, goes now to Northwich (Cheshire), and Miss Picton-Turbervill, who fought North Islington in 1922 and Stroud in 1924, will stand at the next election for the Wrekin Division of Salop. Miss Picton-Turbervill is a wellknown social worker, a member of the National Council of Women, and an ardent advocate for the admission of women to Holy Orders.

Miss Dorothy Jewson, who will contest Norwich, was member for that constituency from 1923 to 1924, and was defeated at the last General Election by Sir E. Hilton Young. Dr. Marion Phillips, the chief woman organiser of the Socialist Party, who took degrees in economics at both the University of Melbourne and London University, goes to the Sunderland Division of Durham, and Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton, who wrote short lives of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Miss Margaret Bondfield, and Miss Mary McArthur, is the candidate for Blackburn, Lancashire.

Miss Jessie Stephen, who is described as a domestic servant and a journalist, and who was the candidate for South Portsmouth in 1923 and 1924, has been endorsed again for that constituency, and Dr. Stella Churchill, the candidate for North Hackney in 1924, will stand for Brentford and Chiswick.

Mrs. Mary Ann Mercer, who was the first woman Mayor of Birkenhead and contested the Fairfield Division in 1924, will stand for Birkenhead. Mrs. R. Townsend has been endorsed for Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, and Miss Kate F. Spurrell, the candidate for Totnes in 1924, for the same division. Miss Spurrell is a teacher and an ex-president of the Plymouth Branch of the National Union of Teachers.

Mrs. C. F. Streeton, of Tonbridge, has been adopted Although the Liberal list is not made up, Mrs. Corbett by Aldershot; Mrs. H. J. Massingham, by East Hampshire; Mrs. P. Cusden, of Reading, by Henley; Miss Ruby Part, of Clifton, Bristol, by Wells, Somerset; Mrs. N. Shimmin, of Leyton, by Salisbury; Miss Eleanor Stewart, of Edinburgh, by North Midlothian and Peebles; and Mrs. La Chard, for West Lewisham.

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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 stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

OUR ADVICE TO PARTIES! The Third Session of the present Parliament came

to an end this week. On February 7th, the Fourth Session will begin, and all women who have worked for women's political equality with men look forward to the announcement in the King's Speech of the Government's plans to fulfil its promise to place an Equal Franchise measure on the Statute Book in time to give women equal voting rights with men at the next General Election. Women's views on that announcement will be expressed at the Public Meeting arranged by the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee at Caxton Hall, on Wednesday evening, February 8th; and every reader of THE VOTE who can make it possible to be in London that evening must make sure of being present at this meeting. year will be one of great political activity. All Parties will be preparing for the coming General Election and selecting their candidates to contest the various seats. How many women will be among those candidates? At present there are seven women Members of the House of Commons out of a total membership of 615. When women have the Parliamentary vote at the same age and on the same terms as men, as promised by the Prime Minister, at the next General Election, there will be 2,250,000 more women voters than men. Is it reasonable to expect that women then will continue to be satisfied with only seven representatives of their own sex in the House of Commons, and no woman Member at all in the House of Lords? England sends 492 Members to the Lower House, but only six of them are women; Scotland sends 74, one of them a woman; but Wales with its 36 Members, and Northern Ireland with 13, send no woman. The Conservative and Unionist Party has four women in the House of Commons, the Labour Party three women, and the Liberal Party no woman and fewer prospective women candidates than either of the other Parties, in spite of its oft-repeated assurance that it will have 500 candidates at the next General Election. Women's organisations have frequently urged the various political Parties to put forward more women candidates, especially where there is a reasonable chance of the candidate winning the seat. We firmly believe that if they would do this, the woman, particularly at the next election, would prove the victor more easily than a man candidate in doubtful constituencies. It would be good policy for any Party if it had a woman member with a record of local public service to her credit, to put her forward as a Parliamentary candidate, support her with the whole Party vote, and secure for her the votes of men and women unattached to any Party who have appreciated her work and among whom she is popular. If every Party would do this at once, we are convinced that there would be many more women Members in the next Parliament, and their training and experience in public work outside would be of inestimable value inside the House. If Parties will not do this, and remain content to place all the remotest possibilities of success in the hands of men candidates, women's organisations will

candidates in the constituencies, where, if they cannot win, the women will, at any rate, split the other votes and bring confusion into the various political camps until all Parties realise that they had better give women more chances than they have at present of winning

EDINBURGH CORPORATION BILL.

On Saturday, December 17th, as was expected, this Bill was lodged at the Private Bills Office. It may be introduced either in the Lords or the Commons, but the decision will not be taken for some weeks.

The Bill embodies the Clause 71 (dealing with venereal disease) which the Corporation was obliged to drop out of its recent Provisional Order. This Clause gives to the Medical Officer of Health compulsory powers of requiring persons believed to be infectious from venereal disease to undergo treatment until cured or non-infectious. Penalties are provided for disobedience.

This new principle of compulsion and penalisation introduced suddenly into our present successful system f free, voluntary, confidential treatment of venereal isease cannot but be a hindrance to the fight against the disease, as it will tend to concealment and delay in seeking advice. It is one of those attractive-looking short cuts to perfection which lead into a morass.

But we oppose it most vehemently because these measures seem fated, in practice, to be used against women rather than men, and against a special class of women-those who are supposed to be prostitutes; and special measures to ensure that women shall be immoral without being diseased involve the public body administering them in the system of State Regulation of Vice-the useless and iniquitous system which does not lessen but encourages immorality, and has been repudiated by the British nation.

For these reasons, we have already written to many Members of Parliament, asking them to watch for the Bill and to oppose it, and we shall be ready with the strongest opposition at all further stages of the Bill.

THE LONDON LOCK HOSPITAL.

We have always urged that women should be on the Board of Management of all general hospitals in which women and children form the majority of patients, and, more particularly, of women's hospitals. The Harrow Road Lock Hospital for Women has 170 female patients, yet no woman is on its Board of Management, and the Ladies' Committee, after many disputes with the present Board, has ceased to exist. We have received from the solicitors acting for the former Ladies' Committee a statement of charges which emphasise more clearly than ever the urgent need for the appointment of women to this Lock Hospital's Board of Management. The first charge is that the Board exercises no effective control over the management of the Hospital. If women were on it, this would surely not be the case. Other charges are: that the management of the staff is unsatisfactory, and that the staff are overworked and underpaid. We can quite believe this, especially when we consider the further charge "that the Ladies' Committee of the Hospital has not been allowed to perform the functions contemplated by the laws of the Hospital and the memorandum issued by the authority of the Board." The sooner a public inquiry is made into these and other charges of mismanagement quoted by the Ladies' Committee, the better, but we insist that the root cause of all the trouble is the fact that there are no women on the Board of Management. In the case of the London Lock Hospital for Women, this is especially desirable, for it aims not only at giving its patients medical treatment, but also moral treatment and opportunity for reform. This is surely work which calls for the help and understanding of women, and we appeal to the Governors, with whom the responsibility of election rests, to see that suitable women are placed on the Board of have to consider very seriously putting forward women Management at the earliest possible date.

THE MINERVA CLUB. PROTECTION" OF WOMEN

Under the excellent and impartial chairmanship of safe conditions for all workers in all trades should be Miss Lucy Bell, a very interesting debate was held last Saturday afternoon at the Minerva Club. Miss Marian Reeves proposed "That protective legislation for undesirable," and this was opposed by Dr. Marion Phillips. The following points were made by

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Protective legislation for the woman worker is undesirable, because it is detrimental to her status as citizen. As citizens, women want "Fair field and no Women should be legislated for as citizens and not classed with "Children and young persons." Artificial legislation tends to keep women as the subject sex, and restricts choice of occupation; it also tends to relegate women to lowest-paid jobs. It is contended that weight-lifting is work unfit for women owing to sex disability, but a recent Government Report states that the fixed loads are well within the capacity of women. A woman is usually self-protective, and would avoid danger in this sort of work as she would in cleaning moving machinery. This is not more dangerous for women than for men. Women should not be debarred from house decorating; there is no known case of lead poisoning among women engaged in this trade, which is a very pleasant and desirable one. Instructions issued to workers in this trade also give a sure guarantee of safety if complied with, and should be equally effective for men and women. Competition is the sole cause of this piece of legislation. Good,

made by co-operation between employer and employed. Dr. Marion Phillips said it was difficult to answer Miss Reeves because factory legislation is no new thing, and the new Government Bill would probably be much the same as others. It was foolish to say that women were classed with children and young persons because children are not employed in industry. trial women want protective legislation. No physical test is applied to persons applying for work, and some general regulation is absolutely necessary to prevent exploitation by employers. Women need protective legislation because, unlike men, they have no trade union strength behind them. The woman worker is not free to struggle, and must have the backing of the law. Women are not as tough as men. Potential mothers particularly need protective legislation. Without it they would not be allowed to rest six weeks before and six weeks after confinement. Restrictions made by protective legislation really act against employers. Answering questions, Miss Reeves said The potential mother is really the best judge of what is safe for herself"; "It is safest for the community to see that no particular section or sex is sheltered ": "There is no protective legislation against nightwork for nurses"; "Women must have freedom of choice."

When the vote was taken, the motion was carried by 22 for, and 7 against—a majority of 15.

TEA AND POLITICS-UP-TO-DATE.

Our last Tea and Politics-up-to-date until next Session of Parliament was held at the Minerva Club, on Wednesday, December 14th, when Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, President of the Women's Freedom League, was the speaker. She dealt particularly with two outstanding features in the political world-one, the proposed indenturing of child labour in Southern Rhodesia; the other, protective legislation specially applied to women. Taking the first of these, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence said that there were two Bills on the subject, one already ratified, the other still to be so. She explained that, although Southern Rhodesia had self-government, the Home Government reserved the right to present measures concerning the treatment of the natives to the Home Parliament. The first Bill allowed the indenturing of native boys and girls under the age of 14, but with no minimum age stated. The Farmers' Association had been behind this Bill, in the interests of cheap and dooile labour. In the mica minefield a large portion of the labour was "piccaninni," and in many cases mothers' rations were issued, so that mothers would live near and so enable the children to be employed. It was now, owing to this Bill, possible to make it compulsory on native children to work where ordered, girls being for the first time included in such legislation, and whipping being allowed for boys under 14 without any charge being made or trial held. It was obvious that to include girls up to 14 in such compulsory labour raised danger of sexual

The second Bill, not yet ratified by the Home Parliament, dealt with the control of natives, and was, in a sense, supplementary and additional to the first Bill. It gives power to the Native Commissioner to act as prosecutor, judge, and jury in cases against himself. Crimes for which he is given these powers over any native are "insolent or contemptuous behaviour," 'disobedience to a reasonable order," etc. The Commissioner has full power, and may order any male under 16 to be whipped. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence characterised this second Bill as even worse than the first, and urged action to prevent its ratification. She said that Mr. Pethick-Lawrence intended to continue to press, by means of questions, for its further consideration and rejection, and she read some questions put and answers given recently in the House on the first Bill. She Mrs. Pierotti, Mrs. Pritchard, and Miss Trotter.

pointed out that the National Women's Liberal Federation had discussed the first Bill and had protested against it, and were considering further action; and added that the non-Party women might well take effective action in the matter.

Passing then to protective legislation confined to women, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence expressed the view that the two opposing sides in this matter quite misunderstood each other, and that those who were against differential protection should alter their method of approach to it; should, in fact, press for a Commission of Inquiry in order to collect and collate scientific data. At present, each side simply contradicted the statements of the other side. She reminded her audience of Mrs. Sidney Webb's words in the Minority Report, "to sweep away all special differentiation between men and women," written ten years ago; and instanced the complete forgetting of such a view in the recent exclusion of women from the painting trade without any inquiry having been made at all. She said that the Labour Party supported special protection; the trade unions supported it; the working women supported it; and they considered the arti-protectionists as reactionaries. She declared that we should no longer rely on abstract theories, but should instead concentrate on obtaining data on concrete cases of hardship.

Miss Underwood then announced the next Tea and Politics-up-to-date, to be held on February 8th; the Equal Political Rights meeting the same night, to decide action after hearing the King's Speech; and the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship meeting on March 8th, during their Annual Conference.

Many questions followed, some on native labour, some on protective legislation, and it was made clear that support of the feminist view was frowned on by Labour officials, who were, by their actions, showing that their citadel of sex differentiation was decidedly shaken. Instructions were reported to have been issued to branches to have no feminist speakers within their doors-instructions resented by, at any rate, some of the recipients.

A pleasant and successful last little Sale of the season took place before and after the meeting. Many thanks to all our helpers-Miss Berry, Mrs. J. R. Knight,

Report No. 44 of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board. A Contribution towards the Determination of the Optimum Load, by E. P. Cathcart, F.R.S., E. M. Bedale, M.A., C. Blair, M.B., K. Macleod, M.B., with a special section by Sybil G. Overton, M.B., H.M. Medical Inspector of Factories. H.M. Stationery Office, 5s. (May be obtained at this Office.)

All members of the Women's Freedom League and all concerned in the winning of equality between men and women should read this Report. They will find in it ammunition to carry their fight to a successful issue. The Report only deals with one section of industrial work-that where weight-lifting and weight-carrying are involved. Three lines of inquiry were designed: (1) Anthropometric data were collected of about 4,000 women in different occupations; (2) researches were made into methods of weight-carrying; (3) about 550 observations were made of loads actually carried or lifted in different industries, together with the weight of the person engaged, in order to compare load with body weight. The Committee divided its investigations into four Groups: (1) factory women; (2) unemployed women; (3) college women; (4) age groups. In Group 1, to quote the Report, "The conclusions reached are that, in regard to fixed loads, the weights in present industrial practice are on the whole well within the capacity of women and adolescents, whilst in occupations where choice of weight is available to the operative, women are usually self-protective, but young persons of both sexes, particularly males, are sometimes apt to attempt to lift and carry a load heavier than that for which they are adapted." There is a fine argument against the proposed Clauses in the new Factories Bill prohibiting women, not men, either young or old, but the "self-protective" women from lifting weights.

Another result of these researches, which is substantiated by other existing data, is that women "are in all cases more variable than men," that is, in strength in relation to their height, weight, etc. The Committee also came to the conclusion that, as regards the relative strengths of the average male and female, the female was a little more than half as strong as the male. Coming away from the average, however, and taking the women habitually engaged in muscular exertion, some astonishing results were revealed. Roughly, the greater the exertion, the greater the strength. For instance, in a chemical works in Glasgow, with girls drawn from the surrounding districts, some of whom came from mothers and grandmothers employed at the same work, we get the following: "40 girls were employed, all doing navvy work; their hours were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with two hours off for meals. All the women and girls worked with ease and barefooted. their carriage and physique were literally remarkable. . we saw one woman who shovelled 20-25 tons of crude borite per day, lifting it to a height of about 2 ft. 6 in. Five girls, who shovelled crystals from evaporating pans into trucks, which, after filling, they wheeled for a considerable distance along very imperfect rails, had an average combined output per group of 6 tons per day." Again, in the case of a brick works, "the girls filled and emptied the ovens, the work done being very heavy. Each girl carried three or four large bricks for a distance of 70-80 yards. These girls were allowed themselves to determine how many bricks they would carry. The majority selected four at a time. The bricks weighed $26\frac{3}{4}$ lb. each . each girl therefore carried a weight only 5 lb. short of a hundredweight. . . . older women worked barefoot. They slammed the clay into wooden moulds, then placed the moulded brick to dry on the steam-heated stone floor. Some women wheeled barrows containing 4-4½ cwt. of bricks. The good carriage of the girls in this factory was also very remarkable. It is of interest to note that the strength of the girls in the chemical and brick works was very much higher than in any of the other trades." In fact, "speaking generally, the heavier the trade, the greater the strength of the women employed." This seems to indicate that the female body, like the male, adapts itself to its usage.

In Group 2, tests were made in the belief that prolonged unemployment might decrease muscular development although the household work done by would prevent any rapid decrease—a belief justified by results.

In Group 3, "the striking thing . . . is the really excellent physical condition of this group of young women when compared with their sisters engaged in industry." The Report suggests that "the high place these college women take in the strength tests" may be explained as Martin explains it: "The suggestion is that in men the exhibition of strength is so familiar an accompaniment of daily life that they have the nervous mechanism for evoking it readily at command, whereas in women manifestations of strength are less matters of routine, so that general mental alertness plays a most important part." It would seem that women, if forbidden to exercise their muscles, get round the difficulty by exercising their brains.

In Group 4 there is a mass of most valuable results, expressed in figures and in words. This deals with the significance of differences between Groups 1, 2, and 3 -how far marriage and motherhood affect strength; how far ancestry and race; how far environment and upbringing, rural, urban, etc.

Part II is devoted to minute study of the effects of load-carrying in a variety of ways, and will be of value in the arrangement of such work in factories.

Part III is the result of investigations to supplement Part I, and to ascertain the optimum load to be recommended for the "protected" young persons from 14-16, from 16-18, and for women.

Industries classed as heavy were selected for this study, and all through Dr. Overton found the adult woman self-protective; the young person, especially the male young person, not so wise. To quote Dr. Overton: "In this inquiry into weight-lifting, resultant definite injury to health has not been proved. Given a woman or young person of average nutrition, the work expected is almost always well within his or her physical capacity. It is here, as always, the subnormal in physique and nutrition who presents the problem, and for whom, according to modern views and standpoints, protective laws are required." Could any feminist desire better support in her steadfast opposition to protective laws imposed upon an entire sex:

Part V contains the general conclusions as to the optimum load for young persons (girls) and for average adult women without causing any strain, and the additional load for a healthy, well-trained adult woman under proper conditions. At the same time, it is admitted that many women are lifting a far heavier load at present without any trace of injury, and obviously, if the weight were a fixed standard for all industries, it might well happen that in some industries the workers would be unduly taxed, whereas in others they would be working at less than their full capacity.

One hopes that the results of investigation published in this Report will shake the Home Secretary's stubborn refusal to hear the views of feminists concerning those Clauses in the Factories Bill which class under similar protection" the adult woman and the young person. The whole Report is a vindication of the feminist contention that an adult woman should be classed, for protective" purposes, with her fellow-worker, the adult man.

OUR LENDING LIBRARY.

- What I Remember." By Millicent Garrett Fawcett, J.P.
- "Ancilla's Share." An Indictment of Sex Antagonism
- "The Police Court and its Work." By Henry Turner
- 'The Poor Man's Court of Justice." By Cecil Chapman "Life's Fitful Fever." By M. W. Nevinson, J.P., L.LA.
 "In Darkest London." By Mrs. Cecil Chesterton.

WHERE TO GO.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.



Saturday, April 28th.

Thursday, January 5th, at 7.30 p.m.

Equal Political Rights Campaign. Open-air Meeting at Highbury Corner, organised by The Women's Freedom Leagne. Speakers: Miss Beamish and Mrs. Flint. Chairman: Miss Cockle.

DARE TO

DARE TO

Miss Cockle.

BE FREE. Thursday, January 12th, at 7.30 p.m.

Equal Political Rights Campaign. Open-air

Meeting at Highbury Corner, organised by The Women's Freedom

League. Speaker: Miss B. Pearson. Chairman: Miss Cockle.

Thursday, January 19th, at 7.30 p.m.

Equal Political Rights Campaign. Open-Air Meeting at Highbury

Corner, arranged by the Women's Freedom League. Speaker:

Miss E. E. Froud. Chairman: Miss Theo. Smythe.

Monday, January 23rd, at 3.15 p.m.

Golders Green. Branch Meeting at 98 Brookside Road (by kind permission of Mrs. Jaynes).

Wednesday, February 8. at 4 p.m.

Wednesday, February 8, at 4 p.m.
Tea and Politics-up-to-date. First meeting of Session. Minerva Club. Brunswick Square.

Friday, February 10th, at 5 p.m.
Organisation Sub-Committee at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1. Saturday, February 11th, at 10 a.m.
National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

PROVINCES.

1928.

Friday, January 27th. Ashford. Branch meeting. Mr. Toke on "Work of the Monks in Kent."

Friday, February 24th. Ashford. Branch Meeting, Friday, March 30 h.

Ashford. Branch Meeting. Dr. Littledale on "Local Birds."

SCOTLAND.

Saturday, January 14th, at 7.30 p.m.
Glasgow. Whist Drive in the Athenæum Restaurant (entrance Buchanan Street), with Cake and Candy Stall. Tickets from Miss Lenton, c/o Miss McLelland, 5, Hayburn Crescent, Partick

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Saturday, December 31st, 3—6 p.m.
Children's Carnival and Fancy Dress Ball at Hammersmith Palais de Dance, in aid of the Six Point Group. Tickets 2/6 1928.

Monday, January 2nd, at 3 p.m. Association of Headmistresses Conference on "The Education of Women in India," in connection with the Four-and-a-half Co Appeal, in the Great Hall, University College, Gower Street.

Wednesday, February 8th, at 8 p.m.

Equal Political Rights Campaign. On the evening after the King's

Speech, at the Opening of the New Session of Parliament, a Meeting e Caxton Ha I of Women's Organisations to decide "Policy

or Action."

Sunday, February 19th, at 11 a.m.

Hampshire House Club, Ravenscourt Park. Speaker: Miss F. A.

Underwood on "The Life and Work of Josephine Butler."

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

The Offices of the Women's Freedom League and the Minerva Publishing Company, Ltd., will be closed from Friday, December 23rd, 5.30 p.m., until Wednesday, December 28th, 9.30 a.m.

MR. FRANK BRIANT, M.P.

Readers of The Vote and members of the Women's Freedom League will be glad to learn that our friend Mr. Briant is much better, and that he has gone into the country for a rest. We all send him our heartiest good wishes for an early and a complete restoration to health and strength.

BRANCH NOTES.

GOLDERS GREEN.

GOLDERS GREEN.

The first Branch Members' Meeting was held on Tuesday, December 13th, at 13, Temple Fortune Court, by kind permission of Miss Hodge, who occupied the Chair. The first item on the agenda was the election of officers—Mrs. D. B. Jaynes (Hon. Secretary) and Mrs. Pierotti (Hon. Treasurer, pro tem.). The work of the branch was discussed. Another members' meeting was arranged for January 23rd, at 3.15 p.m., at 98, Brookside Road, to be followed by an evening meeting the following week. The possibilities of a Josephine Butler meeting were discussed, and it was proposed to hold one in conjunction with the Finchley Branch, which is now being formed, towards the end of March. The meeting concluded by conveying a vote of thanks to Miss Hodge, on a resolution moved by Mrs. Burnett and seconded by Miss Ramsay.

(Hon. Sec.) Mrs. Jaynes. (Hon. Sec.) MRS. JAYNES.

PORTSMOUTH.

Our Tea and Politics-up-to-date on Wednesday, December 14th, was quite a success. A short business meeting was held, after which tea was served. Mrs. Speck then briefly outlined the chief events in the political world of to-day. She mentioned Equal events in the political world of to-day. She mentioned Equal Franchise, the League of Nations Report of the White Slave Traffic and Disarmament, the controversy on the Church, the new scale of unemployment benefit, and the Indian question. An animated discussion followed. Mrs. Poole presided, and at the close thanked the speaker.

(Hon. Sec.) Mrs. Whetton, 89, Festing Grove, Southsea.

EDINBURGH.

Last Wednesday, in the Y.M.C.A. Hall, we shared with the Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship an interesting meeting and discussion on the proposed legislation for introducing compulsion into the methods of dealing with venereal disease in

Dulsion into the methods of dealing with venereal disease in Edinburgh.

Councillor Gibson, in the Chair, said that he failed to understand why the Medical Officer of Health wished to make any change from the voluntary system which is now working so

Dr. Alison Hunter, from Glasgow, concentrated on the medical aspect of the matter, showing how it is impossible to treat any person until it could be said definitely that he was cured, as there person until it could be said definitely that he was cured, as there is no infallible test for either gonorrhoea or syphilis. She mentioned one doctor who, on being asked when he discharged a patient as cured, replied that he did so after he had obtained two consecutive negative tests—rapidly, lest the next should prove

Miss Eunice Murray spoke more generally, proving how, in the past, compulsion never had been a success from any point of view, and how the statistics showed that in Great Britain, with its purely voluntary system, the incidence of venereal disease was much less serious than in other countries, where the authorities relied on notification and compulsory methods. She said how unfortunate it would be if the centenary of Josephine Butler, who spent her life in getting the Contagious Diseases Acts repealed, should be celebrated next year by something very much approaching their reintroduction.

Miss Murray and the other speakers emphasised that the only way to bring these diseases to an end was to combine voluntary confidential treatment with a higher and equal moral standard.

During the discussion, a doctor in the audience tried to make people believe that the authorities were not asking for any wide,

people believe that the authorities were not asking for any wide, dangerous powers at all—merely that those who start treatment should be forced to finish, and that the parents of venereally infected children should be obliged to submit to examination and, if necessary, treatment. But the Bill we are fighting applies to any person "the Medical Officer of Health has reason to believe" is suffering from venereal disease, and who "refuses to undergo or to continue treatment," and, as Dr. Aimée Gibbs pointed out, the Medical Officer of Health cannot have reason to believe anything about anyone who has never presented himself for treatment, unless that person has been denounced by a third person, and there is a special clause dealing with the parents of infected children, proving that this particular one does not apply to them.

As Dr. Hunter pointed out, if the lady in the audience really thought the Bill only asked for the limited powers she said it was to give, she must use a different dictionary from that employed

(Organiser) LILIAN LENTON.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, December 25th, 1927. 6.30 p.m. Mrs. Binns: "Sky-sign or Star?"

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