

THE VOTE,
FEBRUARY 2, 1917.
ONE PENNY.

Votes for Women of 30

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, FEB. 2, 1917

Edited by C. DESPARD.

OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community

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ELECTORAL REFORM CONFERENCE.

Votes for Women of 30.

As we go to press the report of the Electoral Reform Conference is made public. Woman Suffrage is the only question on which an agreed recommendation is not made. The principle is approved by a majority vote—suffragists and anti-suffragists were on the committee—and the following suggestions are made:—

The Conference decided by a majority that some measure of woman suffrage should be conferred. A majority of the Conference was also of opinion that if Parliament should decide to accept the principle, the most practical form would be to confer the vote in the terms of the following resolution:—

Any woman on the Local Government Register who has attained a specified age, and the wife of any man who is on that Register if she has attained that age, shall be entitled to be registered and to vote as a Parliamentary elector.

Various ages were discussed, of which 30 and 35 received most favour.

The Conference further resolved that if Parliament decides to enfranchise women, a woman of the specified age, who is a graduate of any University having parliamentary representation shall be entitled to vote as a University elector.

The recommendations do not apply to Ireland.

HOW PARLIAMENT HAS

"APPROVED THE PRINCIPLE" OF VOTES FOR WOMEN AND BLOCKED PROGRESS.

- 1870.—Suffrage Bill introduced by Jacob Bright. Passed second reading by 33. Defeated on motion for going into Committee.
- 1886.—Suffrage Bill passed second reading. Further progress blocked.
- 1897.—Suffrage Bill passed second reading by 71 votes. Further progress blocked.
- 1904.—Mr. McLaren's Suffrage Resolution passed by 182 to 68 votes.
- 1905.—Suffrage Bill talked out.
- 1906.—Mr. Keir Hardie's Suffrage Bill talked out.
- 1907.—Suffrage Bill talked out.
- 1908.—Mr. Stanger's Bill passed second reading by 179 votes. Further progress blocked.
- 1909.—Suffrage Bill passed second reading by 35 votes. No further progress.
- 1910.—Suffrage Bill passed second reading by 110 votes. Further progress blocked.
- 1911.—Suffrage Bill passed second reading by 167 votes. Further progress blocked. Facilities promised for 1912.
- 1912.—Conciliation Bill rejected by 14 votes.
- 1913.—Woman suffrage amendment to Reform Bill ruled out of order.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE AND THE KING'S SPEECH.

The following letter has been sent by the Women's Freedom League to the Prime Minister:—
144, High Holborn, W.C.

January 30, 1917.

To the Right Hon. David Lloyd George, M.P.,
10, Downing-street, S.W.

Sir,—It has been generally reported in the Press that the majority of the Electoral Reform Committee, presided over by the Speaker, was in favour of the general principle of woman suffrage. We take this opportunity of reminding you that a majority in the House of Commons expressed itself in favour of this principle in 1870, 1886, 1897, 1904, 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1911, when Bills for women's enfranchisement passed their second reading, and that since the beginning of the war politicians of all parties (including the ex-Premier, Mr. Asquith, although a life-long opponent of woman suffrage) have recognised the justice of women's claims to political power.

We therefore urge you, as a life-long supporter of woman suffrage, especially in view of the part women are now taking in the national efforts of this country, and of the part they will be called upon to take in the reconstruction of our national life when the war is over, to recommend, as a matter of urgency, the inclusion of the question of woman suffrage in the King's speech at the opening of Parliament on February 7, so that justice, long overdue, may be meted out to more than half of his Majesty's loyal subjects in the British Isles.

We have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

(Signed) C. DESPARD E. KNIGHT
(President), (Hon. Treasurer),
ANNE E. CORNER FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD
(Acting Political Organiser), (Secretary).

PRESS COMMENTS.

Electoral Conference and Votes for Women.

Woman suffrage, assuming the report to be accepted, is an accomplished fact. The system proposed is one that cannot stand, for it differentiates obviously against single women, among whom are some of the most earnest and best qualified politicians of their sex. The barriers set up are in the highest degree artificial, and seem almost erected deliberately to invite attack. But those are trifles compared to the admission of the principle of woman suffrage, and the principle is clearly admitted, and can never again become matter of controversy. The reservations are probably due to a natural reluctance to create without trial an electorate in which the women's vote would preponderate.—*Daily News*, January 31.

National Service for Women.

An attempt to differentiate between the sexes at a time when much of the work of substitution in the Civil Service and the civilian side of the Army, as well as the industrial and agricultural life of the community, must obviously be undertaken by women if man-power is to be freed to any considerable extent, is felt to be impolitic and uneconomic. It is not improbable that the War Office has a definite scheme of its own for a very striking use of woman-power in unexpected quarters, but this is only a small part of the need for a scheme by which woman-power shall be easily available. . . . Offers of co-operation have been made to Mr. Neville Chamberlain by the various women's societies and, we understand, very courteously acknowledged, but as yet these fine reserves of capable women who have during the past two and a half years served the country so well—often in spite of official hindrances—and have broken down every old theory of the weakness, the incompetence, and the "proper place" of women, have not been called upon. . . . In none of the channels approached for views on Mr. Neville Chamberlain's proposals was there the slightest attempt at the glorification of women for what they have done since the war. It was taken as a matter of course; but it was apparent that women felt that vested interests and prejudice should not interfere to prevent them from serving their country to the best of their ability in the near future.—*Times*, Jan. 29.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, February 2.—SOCIALS COMMITTEE MEETING, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 2 p.m.

Tuesday, February 6.—MEETING to support Dr. Patch's protest, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m. Speakers: Mr. Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. Despard, Dr. Patch, Miss Raleigh, and Miss F. A. Underwood. Chairman: Dr. Knight. Admission free.

Wednesday, February 7.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Nevinson and Miss M. B. Murray. Chair: Miss A. A. Smith. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Hall at 4.30 (6d.).

Friday, February 9.—CROYDON PUBLIC MEETING, Lecture Room, Public Hall, 7 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Tanner.

Wednesday, February 14.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Miss Esther Roper and Mrs. Mustard. Chair: Miss F. A. Underwood. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Hall at 4.30 (6d.). LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m.

Saturday, February 17.—POLITICAL MEETING, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3.15 p.m. Speaker: Dr. G. B. Clark, on "How Our Laws are Made." Chair: Mrs. Mustard. Questions. Discussion. Tea 4.30 p.m. (6d.).

Monday, February 19.—LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL, At Home to London Members, at Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m.—9 p.m. Refreshments. Speeches.

Wednesday, February 21.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Miss Abadam ("The Feminist Outlook") and Mrs. Corner. Chair: Mrs. Mustard.

Friday, February 23.—CROYDON PUBLIC MEETING, 32A, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Mustard, "Women's Place in the Empire."

Sunday, February 25.—Dramatic Recital of "Romeo and Juliet," by Miss Clara Reed, at Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C., 3.30. Tickets, 2s. (numbered and reserved) and 1s., from W.F.L. Office.

PROVINCES.

Wednesday, February 7.—SOUTHSEA WORK-PARTY, 17, Lombard-street, 3 to 7 pm.

We call special attention to—

Tuesday, February 6.—Meeting to support Dr. Patch's protest against women's unenfranchised position, 6 p.m. Minerva Cafe, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Speakers: Dr. Patch, Mrs. Despard, Miss Raleigh, Mr. Pethick Lawrence, and Miss F. A. Underwood. Chair: Dr. Knight. Admission free.

Wednesday, February 7.—Opening of Parliament. Caxton Hall Meeting. Mrs. Nevinson on "The Present Situation," and Miss M. B. Murray.

50,000 SHILLINGS.

Though winter is still upon us the spring is near, and March 2 will bring our

Spring Time Rally

to get in money for the League. The 50,000 Shilling Fund still wants 34,000 shillings, and only a few short weeks remain. The League expects every member and friend to give and collect as many shillings as possible before March 2.

We must have money to

Win the Vote and Freedom.

New collecting cards will be sent with pleasure, and all contributions gratefully acknowledged.

E. KNIGHT.

THEY SUPPORT US.

POLITICAL NOTES.

The Next Step.

The result of the Conference on Electoral Reform is published at the moment of going to press; it now remains for the Government to give effect to the proposals. How Parliament has "approved the principle" of woman suffrage and blocked further progress is shown on the front page of THE VOTE. There must be an end to blocking tactics. We demand votes for women without delay. The artificial barrier proposed is too ridiculous to last long.

The Women's Freedom League, the Independent W.S.P.U., and the suffragists of the W.S.P.U. have picketed outside the House during the sittings of the Conference, and our next step will be to show Members of Parliament that "general recommendations" do not inspire us with great confidence, and that we are "watchful as of old." Parliament meets again on Wednesday, February 7, and we are organising, with other suffrage societies, a large poster-parade, to take place outside the House of Commons on that day from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. Will any member who can help in this important work send in her name at once to the W.F.L. Office, 144, High Holborn? The paraders will meet at the International Suffrage Shop, 5, Duke-street, Adelphi, at 2 p.m., on February 7. Parliament must be made to realise that there can be no more freedom for men before there is freedom for women.

Votes and Work.

It is no new thing for us to find that "Votes for Women" and "Work for Women" are two very different matters, but the point is being brought home to us more forcibly at this time than ever before. We are told by that section of the Press which is anxious to see women included in Mr. Neville Chamberlain's scheme for national civilian service, that "women must not be ignored," "women are clamouring for work," and *The Evening News* goes so far as to say that "no proposal which does not include women is worth twopenny to the nation or the army." With the substitution of the word "votes" for "work," that is exactly what we have been saying for many years. 'Twas ever thus! We ask for more freedom—they offer us work; we ask for more pay—they give us more work; we ask for votes and representation—still the cry comes "More work for women." Our country must learn, and learn quickly, that we do not intend any longer to share indefinitely its responsibilities without also sharing its privileges and liberties.

The Children's Food.

The formation some weeks ago of a Government Department for Food Control raised hopes in our minds that at last some attempt would be made to arrange for a proper distribution of the necessary commodities. Time has passed and we do not seem to be far on the road towards a satisfactory solution of our difficulties. Perhaps it is because "the mills [of Lord Devonport] grind slowly," in which case let us hope that they will "grind exceeding small." We are told that Mr. Runciman's arrangement in connection with restaurant meals has proved a complete failure, and that consultations have been held with hotel and restaurant managers with the object of finding some means of reducing the consumption of meat, yet nothing has been done. To the lay mind it would seem a perfectly easy thing to limit the price (say three or four shillings) that could be paid for any one meal; it might then safely be left to caterers to restrict the amount of food supplied! Perhaps this suggestion is too simple for any Government Department to consider for one moment. Last week it was announced that

Lord Devonport had ordered a reduction of 30 per cent. in the brewing of beer, with a view to releasing sugar for other purposes, that he has left it to brewers to recoup themselves by fixing their own prices, and that having temporarily settled this matter he will now turn his attention to other aspects of the food question. It is difficult to see how the question is settled at all when no means are taken to ensure the distribution of the sugar thus released among those at present unable to obtain it, and the fact that brewers are to make more money for less beer is small consolation to the housewife who is unable to buy enough sugar to supply the physical needs of her children. One feels more and more how badly the nation needs its women to teach it that "it is not meet to take the children's food."

ANNE E. CORNER.

DEPUTATION TO LORD RHONDDA ON VENEREAL DISEASE.

At the Local Government Board on January 24 Lord Rhondda received a deputation on the above subject, organised by the Women's Freedom League and supported by the following societies:—

Actresses' Franchise League, Association of Women Pharmacists, Belfast Suffrage Society, British Dominions Women's Suffrage Union, Forward Cymric Suffrage Union Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, Hastings and St. Leonards Women's Suffrage Propaganda League, Independent W.S.P.U., Irish Women's Suffrage Federation, League of Justice, Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage, Scottish Women's Liberal Federation, Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U., and the Women's International League.

The deputation was introduced by Mrs. Tanner, and included Miss Margaret Hodge (British Dominions Women's Suffrage Union), Mrs. Darent Harrison (Hastings and St. Leonards Women's Suffrage Propaganda League), Dr. Knight (Women's Freedom League), Mrs. Metze (Independent W.S.P.U.), Miss Decima Moore (Actresses' Franchise League), Mrs. Arneliffe Sennett (Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage), Miss Sheepshanks (Women's International League), and Mrs. Lamartine Yates (Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U.).

The deputation discussed with Lord Rhondda their objections to compulsory detention in poor-law institutions of persons suffering from disease, and urged the necessity for women attending centres for treatment to have facilities granted them for access to women doctors where they so desire. They pointed out that to detain persons in poor-law institutions would be class legislation of the worst type, penalising poverty, defeating its own ends by deterring people from seeking aid from the poor-law institutions. Treatment, moreover, would not meet the case, as it was known there was no real cure other than chastity for men. Lord Rhondda informed the deputation that he did not propose to introduce fresh legislation to bring about compulsory detention in poor-law institutions. He expressed himself in full sympathy with the points raised, and sought the opinion of the deputation on kindred points, such as compulsory notification.

The deputation pointed out the injustice of introducing further legislation affecting women before they were enfranchised. On this, Lord Rhondda declared himself a keen suffragist, and laid stress on the need for the co-operation of women in all matters that concern them, especially when it was pointed out that in the present case it was the offenders legislating for the victims.

GIFT TO OUR LIBRARY.—Our grateful thanks to Miss C. E. Price for her gift of "Women and Economics" (Mrs. Perkins Gilman) to the Library. Who will follow this good example and send us books? Such kindness will be much appreciated.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 104.

THE VOTE.

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

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AGENTS.

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THE LABOUR CONGRESS.

An Impression.

To those who can look below the surface, it was a wonderful spectacle. The large, dimly-lighted hall, filled with men—row after row—seven hundred delegates in all, few women—and these generally silent—earnest people, coming for the most part from the rank and file of labour; but each one with many behind him, making the observer feel that what he looked down upon from platform or gallery was in reality a mighty host; and that this host through their toil, skill, and energy, through their ceaseless work in mine and factory and workshop, on the land and on the sea, were actually, as their mates sat hour after hour in the quiet hall, which vibrated now and then to their laughter, their scorn, their enthusiasm, or their indignation, feeding and equipping our soldiers; making it possible for armies to march and fleets to sail, providing for the necessities of millions of men and women workers and mothers and children at home.

This impression lasted the whole time. With it came others. There were two currents of feeling in the hall, both strong; but one that ran below the surface much stronger than the other. And the strange thing was that the voting ran counter, or seemed to run counter, to the feeling in the hall. Will Thorne, who moved the amendment to the resolution calling for united action from the old "International," was listened to with marked impatience and frequent interruptions. J. R. Macdonald, when he rose to support the resolution, met with an ovation such as was given to no other speaker. And yet the amendment was carried by an enormous majority. It was manifest that militarist speeches were displeasing to the audience. But, on paper, and by the card vote, militarism triumphed.

Let who will explain this strange anomaly. For our own part we believe that Labour, in its right mind, Labour, as represented by men who, but dimly feeling the power and responsibility of their own class, is yet consciously straining against the leading strings of party and precedent, is strongly seeking after some means of ending the present fratricidal strife.

Another impression, well worthy of our earnest

consideration, was that one of the old arguments against woman's suffrage—that women might well afford to trust their interests to men—is supremely false. Here was a Labour Party Conference. Its object, we presume, was to bring the executive, the Labour members and the Labour Ministers face to face with those who had given them the power they possess, to receive their report and to press upon their notice matters of urgency to the great body of their supporters. What did these Labour delegates consider of the greatest importance. We can gather this from the agenda. Looking over its last pages, we find a long and elaborate series of resolutions on Education and Child-welfare, others on National Insurance, Old-age Pensions, State Aid for the Blind, Sanatorium Treatment for Phthisis, and Housing; but before these could be touched upon, the policy of the Party, the conditions of industry, the attitude of Labour after the war, the relations between the work of men and women, and the Government's war policy had to be discussed; and not until the afternoon of Friday, when the Congress had begun to break up, were any of these later resolutions taken. About an hour and a half were allotted to them.

Might we not have imagined that, concerning matters of such vital moment to the nation as our children, their homes, efforts to stamp out the terrible white plague that is ravaging our families, some strong, impassioned instruction would have been given to the men on the platform, with an intimation that whatever else went by the board these should be forced upon the attention of the Government. Surely it would have been so had women, with the power of the vote behind them, been able to take a fair part in the business of the Conference.

We do not dispute the goodwill of these men; we believe they are sincere and earnest. But the impression made upon us was that, with the best of goodwill, they could not fitly represent women—they could not see with our eyes.

We blame no one. It is all perfectly natural. Everyone who knows anything of human nature is well aware of the fact that our work, our business in life, must have a deep importance for us. These men are spending their lives in toil to build up and maintain material civilization. With skill and hardihood they are moulding earth's products to their use; coal and iron, timber and stone, brass and steel, water and fire are their agents. Working together in great bodies, they have to organize themselves in their unions, so as to resist oppression, and these—the conditions of their labour and the strength of their combination—are to them matters of vital importance.

Woman has her work. Throughout the ages she has been busy—not so much with earth's material products as with life. This has been her supreme pre-occupation. Bearing, rearing, training, loving the little ones who are to make the world of the future; caring for the helpless, the sick, the defective; healing and bringing back to life those whom men, in their fierce passion, are torturing—this is her work, these are her interests. We venture to assert that had a large number of women, with the power of the Parliamentary vote behind them and of their unions, been present at the Conference, and had they had their part in preparing the agenda, its business would have taken a different course.

We hope that before another Labour Conference takes place our first object will be attained. Then, with the power of the vote behind us, we shall be able to give effect to our demand that the great questions on which the life or death, the health or disease, the happiness or misery of the people of the nation depend shall be given their true place in the Councils of the State.

C. DESPARD.

THE PARLIAMENT OF LABOUR.

Manchester, Jan. 23-26, 1917.

At the Manchester Conference of the Labour Party last week Mr. G. J. Wardle, Member of Parliament for Stockport, presided over an assembly of 700 delegates, which included five members of the new Government. The secretary of the Labour Party, Mr. A. Henderson, is a member of the War Cabinet of five, Mr. John Hodge is at the head of the new Ministry of Labour, Mr. G. N. Barnes is Pensions Minister, Mr. W. Brace Under-Secretary for Home Affairs, and Mr. G. H. Roberts Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. Never has Labour held such important positions in the Government of the country, but it was the duty of the Manchester Conference of the Party to ratify or reject its acceptance of office under the Premiership of Mr. Lloyd George. At last year's Conference at Bristol Mr. Henderson's inclusion in the Coalition Government was accepted by the Party, in spite of opposition; this year it was the fate of six members which hung on the decision at Manchester, and it was on this decision that the first great tussle of the Conference took place on the opening day.

Inside or Outside the Government?

The chairman, in his opening address, indicated the "official" view when he declared that to divorce political and economic power would be suicidal to Labour; both were essential to its protection. As a suffragist, listening to his words, which were received with enthusiasm by a large section of his hearers, they appeared equally applicable to our own Cause, and should be remembered as a good weapon in our armoury:—

To leave all legislation, all administration, all government solely to others is to abandon the mainsprings of power to those who, whatever their will, whether it be good or bad, have not the knowledge necessary to protect and ensure the interests of the workers in a domain which touches their daily life at every point, and which, in the existing circumstances, is more important than ever.

The argument of Mr. Henderson, Mr. J. H. Thomas, and Mr. J. R. Clynes was that Labour would have more power inside than outside the Government, and that if Labour stood aside from national activity it could not claim a place in deciding the terms of peace. It was left to Mr. A. Bevin (Bristol Dockers) to suggest that Lords Curzon, Milner, Rhondda, and Devonport ("Lord Von Bissing") were not desirable company for Labour leaders. What were they doing in that galley? The big guns of the minority were brought up by Mr. Philip Snowden, who, in the course of a speech of biting sarcasm, inquired whether there ever had been an interview with Mr. Lloyd George which was not "entirely satisfactory"? Those who were satisfied in haste repented at leisure. If the withdrawal of Labour from the Government would have a disastrous effect upon the Allies, how about the withdrawal of Mr. Asquith (the "indispensable," according to Mr. Henderson a week before he found himself a member of the Northcliffe-Lloyd George Government) and Sir Edward Grey? Since Labour had joined the Government legislation, Mr. Snowden declared, had been reactionary, and the speeches of the new Minister for Labour showed him to be under similar influence. By a majority of 1,542,000 the voting went in favour of the participation of Labour in the new Government—and the Prime Minister sent a telegram of congratulation.

Deportation or Civil Trial?

Another subject which moved the Conference to wild excitement was the deportation of Clyde work-

men without trial. Mr. David Kirkwood, one of the deportees, received a tremendous ovation when he rose to speak; his statement of the causes of the trouble which led to a strike, a visit from Mr. Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions, and Mr. Henderson, and afterwards to deportations, ended with the declaration: "I go home to Glasgow or I go to prison!" Responding to excited cries for "Henderson! Henderson!" the secretary of the Labour Party proceeded to state the other side to the case. He said he had no part nor lot in the order for deportation, and declared himself prepared to stand or fall by the decision of a special committee, chosen by the Conference, to examine the facts, documents, and witnesses. When, amid interruptions, he demanded a trial, he was met by shouts of "So does Kirkwood!" and "Why did you not resign?" "I should be resigning every day to please some of you!" he retorted. "I am not sure that I could not resign every day to please myself, but I am there to see the war through!" The committee was duly elected by ballot, and a telegram sent to the Prime Minister demanding the unconditional release of the rest of the deportees. The telegram, and the answer, which was not forthcoming, were the subject of frequent inquiry throughout the rest of the sittings.

"Heavy Injustice to Women."

Dr. Marian Phillips, in seconding the franchise resolution, which was the last resolution standing in the name of the Executive, drove home the moral of the Clyde deportations as it applied to women. "You have protested strongly against deportation without trial," she said, "but do not forget that as heavy an injustice is placed upon women, who are without a voice in the government of their country. We want you to protest, if the Speaker's Conference says nothing about votes for women. We hope this is the last time such a resolution will come before the Labour Conference. Make it a real war cry, and redeem the many pledges you have given!" It cannot be said that the Conference showed any great desire to discuss the question of franchise, which was declared to be "the most important" by Mr. W. C. Robinson, the mover of the adult suffrage resolution, and a representative of the Textile Trades, in which Lancashire women are closely concerned and included with organised labour. The Conference, he insisted, should see that women have equal justice with men. "It ought to be as easy for them to get on the voters' list as on the rate book." There were shouts of "Agreed! Agreed!" and the resolution was passed without opposition.

Neither Blacklegs nor Drudges.

The resolution on the position of women after the war, passed unanimously, included the demand that trade unions should accept women in all trades in which they are employed, and that women employed in trades formerly closed to them should receive the standard rates now paid and recognised by men's trade unions. "Women do not want to be blacklegs or industrial drudges," said Dr. Marian Phillips, in moving the resolution; "it is up to the trade unions to let women in as members, and to see that they get Trade Union rates of wages." On this question, too, there was no keen interest shown in continuing the discussion; the vote was taken immediately after the short speeches of the mover and seconder.

Only two other brief speeches were made by women: Miss Mary McArthur, speaking on the

question of unemployment after the war, urged the necessity of thinking out plans in advance so that women were not left without work, protection, or money. Miss Bondfield advocated 30s. as the legal minimum wage, and recommended Mr. Hodge, the new Minister of Labour, to turn his attention to the complete overhauling of the Trade Boards. The resolution demanding immediate negotiations for peace was defeated, also that which urged the reconstitution of "the International"; Labour's opposition to military conscription was rigorously affirmed, industrial conscription was declared to be a direct violation of official pledges, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald came to the assistance of Mr. Will Thorne in an emphatic protest against the deportations of civilians from Belgium and France. The nationalisation of railways and mines, the Government control of agricultural land were strongly advocated.

Importance of Political Power and Action.

Suffragists may well note the vital importance attached by the Conference to political action. On the recommendation of the Executive Committee the new executive was instructed to bring the resolutions on after-war problems to the notice of the Government, and to request the Prime Minister to receive a deputation of the executive and movers of the resolu-

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE CAMPAIGN IN MANCHESTER.

For a whole month Manchester has had Miss Clark and Miss Munro in its midst. Do you know what that means? The city was dead to the Freedom League, and the League languished. War work and war sacrifice absorbed everybody and everything—the last spare halfpenny. Old members lapsed; new ones were not forthcoming. We were resigned to the inevitable. When we heard that Miss Munro and Miss Clark were coming for a whole month, we felt sorry for them: they were bound to be horribly disappointed. Some of us did what we could in connection with a combined suffrage committee, but progressive we were not; happy we were not—and with regard to the Speaker's Electoral Reform Conference we were hopeless. Happy hunting-ground for organisers of suffrage campaigns!

But the scene is changed. Activity and hope are the order of the day. The city's war motto, "Do something!" has become ours. We are all enthusiastic. Miss Clark's tremendous energy has worked the change. She's great! And Miss Munro's persuasive eloquence and gentle insistence has made that energy tell. While Mrs. Despard's presence and wonderful speeches during the last week have made the work permanent.

Forty new members, and 650 copies of THE VOTE sold during Conference week, are the material results of the campaign. A new Branch to be born here next week—enthusiasm stirring in the hearts of weary "old timers"; these, too, count for something. Manchester will play her part, a worthy part, in the tussle (the final one) that lies ahead. Hooray!

The following meetings have been held with marked success:—

(1) At Home, at Mrs. Milne's, Roebuck-lane; (2) house meeting, at Mrs. McMurray's; (3) attempt at open-air work, Miss Munro speaking in the biting wind and frost; (4) Sunday afternoon, Union Chapel Brotherhood, Miss Munro on the White Slave Traffic; (5) social to welcome Mrs. Despard, Clarion Café; (6) At Home, at Mrs. Campbell's Stretford-road; (7) At Home, at Miss Baldwin's, West Dids-

tions. Keep on making themselves heard is a good motto.

Among the 700 delegates to the Conference there were about a dozen women; with the exception of those representing the Independent Labour Party, and the Women's Labour League, the women delegates belonged to Weavers' Associations in which men and women are members, and elect men and women to represent them; the voices of these women were not heard, however, during the proceedings, but they did not take a noisy part in the passionate storms that from time to time swept over the serious considerations of the assembly. No doubt when women have a firmer footing and greater power their influence will be to push to the forefront of the agenda matters vital to national life, which, broadly speaking, were rushed through during the concluding hours of the Manchester Conference, with the time allotment for speeches curtailed to five and three minutes, and they will curb the outbreaks of disorder which at times rendered the chairman powerless. But the great gathering in the Albert Hall, Manchester, was not without a sense of humour, for when a French visitor, expressing fraternal greetings, declared that he had been impressed by the order and method of procedure, the assembly burst into uproarious laughter; the Frenchman's point went home! A. A. SMITH.

bury; (8) coffee-house meeting, at Worsley; (9) public meeting, at the Association Hall.

But the best result will be seen in the near future, when Manchester justifies the faith of the beloved President of the Women's Freedom League and the downright hard work of Miss Clark and Miss Munro.

Good luck attend their next and every effort for *The Cause!* JANET HEYES.

Women of 30; Men of 21.

Speaking as chairman at the public meeting, Association Hall, on January 26, Mr. George G. Armstrong (*Daily News*, Manchester) stated that the Electoral Reform Conference was likely to recommend the enfranchisement of women of 30 and men of 21 in order to balance the preponderance of women. Dealing with the matter as a keen worker for votes for women, Mr. Armstrong said it would be well if such a recommendation were accepted for, being so transparently ridiculous, it would speedily require revision. Men, he declared, strongly advocated majority rule when men, not women, were in the majority, but they had made an awful hash of politics, and the assistance of enfranchised women was both necessary and urgent. Miss Janet Heyes, in a moving speech, pointed out how only voters count in the eyes of Members of Parliament. Mr. Cameron Grant's vigorous speech, showing the danger to men of voteless women outside the Trade Unions, made a deep impression, and Mrs. Despard appealed earnestly for the political and economic co-operation of men and women in constructive, not destructive work.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

Speaking at Caxton Hall last Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Lansbury said that with all the present talk of high wages for women, he, as a guardian, was frequently coming across women whose wages, notwithstanding the present high prices, were only 12s. and 15s. a week, and he appealed to women to help in the organising of women in trade unions—if possible in the same unions with the men. He wanted to compel men to take them in on equal terms, so that, at the end of the war, employers should not be able to use men and women against each other. Mr. Lansbury thought that the war had brought the question of woman suffrage much nearer a settlement, and given the old enthusiasm, even this Government could be compelled to give women the vote. He considered that the greatest work any of us could lay our hand to was to help in the emancipation of women.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS. THEY SUPPORT US.

Women's Freedom League and the Prime Minister.

The following letter has been addressed to the Prime Minister:—

144, High Holborn, London, W.C.,
The Right Hon. David Lloyd George, M.P.,
10, Downing-street, Whitehall, S.W.

DEAR SIR,—On December 11 the Women's Freedom League wrote to ask you very kindly to receive a deputation on the question of Women's Suffrage. This letter was acknowledged, but not answered. On January 5 we therefore wrote you again; this letter also remained unanswered.

While fully appreciating the heavy calls made upon your time and energy at this time, we feel certain that nothing but an oversight could have prevented our receiving an answer to a letter of such importance to us, and also, we believe, to yourself, who have always been a keen supporter of the movement of which we form a part.

We therefore urge you most respectfully to remedy this oversight at your earliest possible convenience.

We have the honour to be, dear Sir, your obedient servants,

C. DESPARD (President),
E. KNIGHT (Hon. Treasurer),
F. A. UNDERWOOD (Secretary),
A. E. CORNER (Acting Political Organiser).

OLD SONGS, SATIRES AND FAIRY TALES.

A delightful programme of Old Songs, Satires and Fairy Tales, arranged by Miss Winifred Holloway and Miss Katherine Raleigh, was given at the Bijou Theatre last Friday afternoon. Miss Holloway's rendering of Old Songs, both in French and English, merited the highest praise, while Miss Raleigh's Fairy Tales, culled from the literature of different nations and varied times charmed an appreciative audience. To both artistes we offer our warmest thanks for a delightful afternoon's performance, and only regret that the inclement weather was responsible for a comparatively small attendance.

The chair was taken by Mrs. Mustard, who appealed for new members and support for the Women's Freedom League.

The Despard Arms.

123, Hampstead-road, N.W.

Our grateful thanks to Lady Markham, Miss Juliet Reckitt, Mrs. Bage, and Mr. Snow, who gave pounds in money to our Pound Day on January 20, also to all others who contributed liberally pounds in kind. We shall put all to the best possible use. A very pleasant evening was spent. Mrs. Despard was present, and gave a warm welcome to the Messenger Girls from Messrs. Speaight and Sons, printers of THE VOTE, and to other visitors, all of whom were delighted with Mrs. Corner's songs, Miss Julie Huntsman's recitations, and Miss Sell's impersonations of "Mrs. Brown" and "Mrs. Green." The Pound Day and social evening were so successful that we hope to repeat the experience in the near future. Best of thanks to Mrs. Turner for a gift of tablecloths. We can do with more! Who will help?

Women's Freedom League Settlement.

1, Everett-street, Nine Elms, S.W.

The work has been in full swing for the last three weeks and is more needed than ever during this cold weather. The report of our Christmas party seems to have been lost in the post. It was a great success. We send our grateful thanks to our many friends who have sent us gifts in money and in kind.

"The Spiritual Awakening of Womanhood" is of vital importance and interest, particularly at the present time. Rev. Dr. Orchard and Mrs. George Morgan are speaking on this subject, for the Free Church League for Woman Suffrage, in the Lecture Hall, King's Weigh House Church, Duke-street, W., on Friday, February 2, at 8 p.m. Further particulars and tickets can be obtained from the office of the League, 13, Breams-buildings, Chancery-lane, E.C.

Miss Picton-Turbervill gave an enlightening lecture on "Women and the Ministry," dealing specially with the Church of England, at St. George's Vestry Hall, Bloomsbury, W.C., a short time ago. She pointed out that the attitude of the Church towards women was entirely opposed to that of Christ; there was no trace of sex or class distinction in His teaching.

SEE OUR SALE AND

BRANCH NOTES.

Croydon. Office: 32a, The Arcade, High-street.

On January 11 a New Year's Tea was arranged for the soldiers' and sailors' wives who attend the weekly social. A very pleasant time was spent. Several musical friends very kindly entertained so well that closing time came long before it was welcome. The committee thank all those who so kindly sent contributions towards the tea. Funds are still wanted for our National Aid work.

Glasgow Suffrage Shop, 212, Bath-street.

On January 9 a public meeting was held in Central Halls. Miss Hodge spoke on "Women as Empire Builders," pointing out the part women had played in the building up of our Overseas Dominions—a subject on which she is well qualified to deal through long personal experience. Miss Eunice Murray presided, and at the close of the meeting a vote of thanks to Miss Hodge for her excellent address was moved by Mrs. Murray, Cardross. An afternoon "At Home" was given on the same day by Miss White in order that the members might have the opportunity of meeting Miss Hodge.

A very enjoyable At Home was held last Saturday at 212, Bath-street, the hostesses being Misses McLellan and McPhail. The musical programme was in the hands of Miss Kate Evans, and everyone was delighted with the fare provided, including Miss Evans' recitations. Miss Jack, from Edinburgh, gave a very illuminating address upon the necessity of women organising just now, so as to protect their interests against attempts made to oust them from the positions they now fill. Miss Eunice Murray presided. The room was crowded with an enthusiastic audience, and our best thanks are due to the hostesses who gave us such a pleasant afternoon.

Scottish Scattered Branch.

Thanks to the kindness of Mrs. McIntyre a pleasant afternoon was spent last week. Mrs. Kennedy took the chair, and Miss Eunice Murray spoke upon the danger of compulsion for women, the need for organisation, and the prospects of the Electoral Reform Bill. Miss Murray urged those interested in suffrage to promise a definite weekly sum for an organiser for Scotland, and some promises were made. A meeting was also held at Motherwell, thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Fraser, the speaker being Miss Eunice Murray. A large amount of literature was sold, and some money subscribed for W.F.L. cigarettes, THE VOTE and pamphlets to be sent to the troops.

Anfield.

Friday, January 19, being the first meeting of the New Year, took the form of a social evening. Refreshments were provided, and musical items very ably rendered by Mrs. Gibson, Miss Doris Hunter, and Miss Elsie Ball. An excellent address was given by Miss Blackburn, the subject being "Salvation," which was much appreciated by all present. Miss Blackburn's fine ideas calling forth a good discussion, Miss Davey being in the chair. We all hope this will be the beginning of a good year's suffrage work.

London Branches Council.

The L.B.C. held a drawing-room meeting on Saturday, January 27, at 22, Harley-road, Hampstead, by kind invitation of Miss A. A. Smith, when Mrs. Mustard and Mrs. Corner were the speakers and Mrs. Clark was in the chair. Mrs. Mustard showed, from many examples, how necessary it is for us to follow the example of the United States and institute a State Department for children. The fate of the working men who neglected, during the Napoleonic wars, to keep up their demand for the franchise was dealt with by Mrs. Corner, who warned women against a similar fate.

A NATIONAL FRANCHISE.

A Demonstration will be held in the KINGSWAY HALL, KINGSWAY, LONDON.

On SATURDAY, FEB. 10, 1917, at 3 p.m.

(Doors open at 2.30), to demand

VOTES FOR ALL MEN & WOMEN

So that Soldiers, Sailors and Women shall not be excluded from the Parliamentary Register.

Speakers—Rt. Hon. Sir JOHN SIMON, M.P., Mr. W. C. ANDERSON, M.P., Miss MARY MACARTHUR, Councillor MARGARET ASHTON, Mrs. BARTON.

TICKETS—Numbered and Reserved 2/6; Reserved 1/- and 3d. Apply to the Secretary, National Council for Adult Suffrage, 27, Chancery Lane, London, E.C.

EXCHANGE, PAGE 104.

FRIDAY,
FEB. 2,
1917.

THE VOTE

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Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

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A PILGRIMAGE TO BUDDHA - Keshub Chunder Sen.
UMA AND SHIMA: A Story Mary Winchester Abbot.

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MISCELLANEOUS.—cont.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE will hold Public Meetings at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, every Wednesday afternoon, at 3 o'clock. Feb. 7th, Mrs. Nevinson, L.L.A., "The Present Situation," Miss M. B. Murray. Chairman: Miss A. A. Smith.

64-PAGE BOOK ABOUT HERBS AND HOW TO USE THEM, free. Send for one.—TRIMMELL, The Herbalist, 144, Richmond-rd., Cardiff. Est. 1879.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

BRITISH DOMINIONS WOMAN SUFFRAGE UNION.—Ten Lectures on "Women as Builders of Empire," by Miss Margaret Hodge, St. George's Vestry Hall, Hart-street, Bloomsbury, Tuesdays, beginning January 23, at 8 p.m. Tickets for the Course, 7s. 6d. (to members of Suffrage Societies, 5s.). Each lecture will be repeated on the following Friday at 3 p.m. Single tickets, 1s., from the Int. Suffrage Shop, 5, Duke-street, Adelphi.

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