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# THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

## WOMEN POLICE

**T**HE WORK OF THE VOLUNTARY PATROLS — an emergency War Service inaugurated by the National Council of Women — started on the 27th October, 1914; between that date and the end of the War some 5,000 Voluntary Patrols worked in Great Britain and demonstrated clearly that there was a permanent place for women in the Police Forces of the country.

In order to train women for this pioneer work three Training Schools were started — in Bristol, 1916, under Miss Peto, in Liverpool, 1918, under Miss M. H. Cowlin, and in Glasgow, 1918, under Miss Tancred.

Since 1916 whole-time policewomen could be paid out of the Police Grant, but they could not properly be sworn as constables until the passing of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act in 1919 legalised the appointment of women as police constables. This fact was clearly stated by Sir Ernley Blackwell, Financial Adviser to the Treasury in his evidence before the 1920 Committee on the Employment of Women in Police Duties.

The Report of this Committee indicates the steps to be taken in order to transform the Voluntary Patrol into the official police-woman and bring her “within the scope of the Police Acts for all purposes.”

The Committee was of the opinion that if the Police Authorities employed policewomen at all they would wish to select and train them themselves. The Bristol and Glasgow Training Schools therefore closed down and those who were not official members of the force devoted themselves to propaganda.

The Police Act 1919 empowered the Secretaries of State to make regulations for policemen and policewomen and set up the Police Federation and the Police Council.

The next advance was Pensions for policewomen, obtained by the inclusion of full-time women in the Police Pensions Act 1921.

The Geddes Axe which fell in 1922, though it checked the movement could not stop the advance. The Police Authorities who

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were favourable to policewomen had them sworn in as constables after the publication of the Report on the Employment of Policewomen in 1924.

Regulations for Policewomen were issued in 1931, eleven years after they had been recommended by the 1920 Committee. These regulations stabilise conditions of service all over Great Britain and give security of tenure to policewomen, they also define their duties and bring them within the purview of the Police Council, the body responsible for the "consideration of general questions affecting the police". Since 1932 Miss Peto, Superintendent Metropolitan Police, has served on the Police Council.

The Women Police and Patrols Committee exists to keep in touch with the movement nationally by means of public meetings, deputations to the Secretaries of State and to Local Police Authorities; by giving evidence before Home Office Committees on the employment of Policewomen in connection with Sexual Offences against Children, Street Offences, Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure as well as the Committees dealing with women for police duties; by questions and debates in both Houses of Parliament, and by meetings in the House of Commons, etc.

Three important investigations have been carried out by the Committee:—

THE SCHEDULE of 1923 showed the effect of the Geddes Axe and the exact position of policewomen in Borough and County Forces in Great Britain as given in replies to the N.C.W. Questionnaire by the Chief Constables employing them; the date of appointment and attestation: duties, pay and allowances, training etc: with comments by the Chief Constables.

A REPORT on conditions in cells in police stations with reference to the custody of women prisoners 1925.

Women Police PETITION presented in 1933 to show the local demand for policewomen in the Boroughs and Counties of Great Britain.

The Committee also receives reports and corresponds with the Dominions and foreign countries working for Women Police in all parts of the world. Information has been sent to Australia, Canada, S. Africa, Ireland, Scandinavia, France, etc.

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### THE PRESENT POSITION:

The Police (Women) Regulations 1931 assign the following duties to women.

1. Patrol Duty.
2. Duties in connection with women and children reported missing, found ill, injured, destitute, or homeless, and those who have been the victims of sexual offences, or are in immoral surroundings.
3. Taking statements from women and children in cases of sexual offences.
4. Duties in connection with the conveyance of women and children to or from hospitals, poor-law institutions, police stations, prisons, places of detention and industrial and reformatory schools.
5. Watching female prisoners or women who have attempted suicide detained in hospitals, etc.
6. Attendance on women and children in Court.
7. Searching and attending female prisoners.
8. Clerical work.
9. Plain clothes duty and detective work.

### NUMBERS OF POLICEMEN AND POLICEWOMEN CONTRASTED.

*The present position as shewn in H.M. Inspectors' Report for 1935.*

Since the Statutory Regulations for Policewomen, 1931, the following towns have attested their policewomen: Birmingham 10 (also 4 unattested), Bristol 6, Chesterfield 1, and Hove 1.

The following towns have *not* attested their policewomen: Manchester 5, Liverpool 3, Southampton 2, Huddersfield 1, Birkenhead 1, and Salop 2.

## NUMBER IN POLICE FORCES.

	Policewomen.		Policemen
Metropolitan and City of London	68	Metropolitan and City of London	20,433
England. 33 Boroughs 5 Counties	111	England and Wales. 121 Boroughs 60 Counties	38,113
Wales has no policewomen.			
Scotland	28	Scotland	6,556
Total	<u>207</u>		<u>65,102</u>

Cost for England and Wales - £22,751,377.

Vacancies.	England and Wales	...	759 = 2.26 per cent
	City of London	...	101
	Metropolitan	...	168
	Total		<u>1,028</u>

In the 143 Police Forces in England and Wales with no policewomen all duties are performed by men with the help of 134 whole time matrons, in Scotland there are 40, and a large number of matrons called as required for such duties as searching and escort of female prisoners etc. Not being trained police officers matrons can only do police work when accompanied by a male officer. A policewoman can act alone and so save time and money and free the man for his own work.

## COST OF A POLICEWOMAN AT THE COUNTY POLICE RATE.

The County Accountant for Herts, 1933, estimates the *total cost of a policewoman* at £260 per annum. After crediting 50 per cent Home Office grant, one half, or £130, falls upon the County Police Rate, and this would apply similarly to Borough Rates.

## INCREASE IN JUVENILE CRIME.

In all Chief Constables' Reports there is noted an Increase in Juvenile Crime.

Sir Leonard Dunning states: "It is especially with regard to two evils, Juvenile Crime and Prostitution, that the preventive work of the Police can be done by women."

## PREVENTIVE WORK:

The Chief Constable of Glasgow said "I would like to emphasize particularly the value of preventive work which policewomen are better fitted to perform than men."

## MOBILE POLICEWOMEN IN COUNTY FORCES:

A mobile force of 8 attested policewomen is attached to County Headquarters in Gloucestershire, 4 of whom cover rural areas by means of motor cycles. "We have been much impressed by evidence of their value and efficiency in this County." (Reports of Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure, 1929).

Fifteen attested policewomen are attached to the Lancashire County Police and two to the Hertfordshire County Police, and they are all doing valuable work in connection with women and children in the country districts.

## HERTFORDSHIRE:

"During their period of service (since July, 1928) the women police constables have given every satisfaction and have made themselves practically indispensable in connection with offences relating to women and children. . . .

Since the women constables have been employed I have found there is a greater readiness on the part of the public to report alleged offences in connection with women and children. . . .

The women have made the declaration of a constable and have the full powers of the male constables.

Chief Constable, Hertfordshire, 1936

## WHAT SOME POLICE AUTHORITIES SAY:

December 1935, Mr Short asked the Home Secretary the number of policewomen in the Metropolitan Police Force; and what increase, if any, has occurred since 1931?

In reply Sir John Simon said that the strength of women police in the Metropolitan Police district has increased in the period referred to, from 47 to 66. "I have now sanctioned a revised total establishment of 142, and the necessary steps are being taken to give effect by stages to this decision".

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## BIRMINGHAM:

"We now have 2 Inspectors, 2 Sergeants and 13 Constables in the women police, all of whom are doing very excellent work in this City. In 1929, in my Annual Report, I stated that the women police had been such a success here and had done such splendid useful work that they had more than justified their existence, and that I hoped to increase their numbers; which has since been done.

Chief Constable, Birmingham, May, 1933.

Sir Charles Rafter was always keenly interested in the progress of the women's branch of the police. On more than one occasion he paid tributes to their invaluable service and usefulness.

Police Chronicle 30-8-35

## NOTTINGHAM:

"There are 4 policewomen employed in the Force and they are doing very fine work indeed. Their duties are chiefly associated with women and children."

Chief Constable, Nottingham, 1933.

From REPORT OF FIFTH COMMISSION, LEAGUE OF NATIONS, on Traffic in Women and Children in Far East.

**WOMEN OFFICIALS:** There is no doubt that in investigations involving the questioning of women and girls and in efforts to influence them from a moral point of view the collaboration of trained women assistants is of great practical value. Girls who have resisted all efforts of male officials to obtain their confidence would give their full story to a woman.

From REPORT OF H.M. INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND. 31st December, 1935.

**POLICEWOMEN:** The value of the policewomen in the cities, larger burghs and industrial areas cannot be overestimated. They have many delicate and difficult tasks to perform, and I am glad to be able to report that they have performed them in a tactful and efficient manner, with credit to themselves and to the Forces to which they are attached.

## WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

### *Amendment of the Statutory Regulation on Strength.*

Until the Statutory Regulation on Strength i.e. sufficient numbers for appointed duties, is so amended as to make the appointment of policewomen compulsory the decision whether or not to employ policewomen lies with the Local Police Authority.

### *Training Centre for Policewomen.*

Recognising that the work of policewomen will depend for its efficiency on the right woman with the right training the N.C.W. advocates the establishment of a preliminary Training Centre for Women Police under a Woman Supervisor, in one of the larger Provincial Forces, for women possessing the required qualifications set out in the Regulations, to be followed by the ordinary training given to all members of police forces.

Our plea for Women Police is based on the belief that the police service will not be a truly efficient one until fully attested trained women have their share in it.

This pamphlet is written to supply a reasoned statement on the growth of the movement and the need for a percentage of trained and attested women police in the interests of women and children in all police forces in Great Britain.

## **NOTE:—**

**For latest information, see over.**

June 1936.

Copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the N.C.W Office, 92 Gower Street, W.C.1. at 2d. each, or per dozen.

## Up-to-date Information on Women Police.

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### NUMBERS.

In the Metropolitan Area the policewomen now number 100. In the Boroughs and Counties of England there are 112 policewomen and 40,530 policemen, an increase of 1,731 men. In Scotland there are 32 policewomen to 6,695 men, an increase of 139. It will be seen that the numbers of policewomen are very small in relation to the large increases in the male police force.

### DUTIES.

Until the Government takes action to ensure that the work assigned to policewomen by the Statutory Regulations of 1931 *shall be performed by women*, much of the work will continue to be performed by men. It is generally agreed that the appointment of policewomen for duties—

- (1) In connection with women and children who have been the victims or witnesses of sexual offences, and the taking of statements from such women and children, and
- (2) The custody escort and attendance in Court of women prisoners in police cells and Courts

*should be made compulsory* in all Borough and County Police Forces in Great Britain.

### TRAINING.

All Police Authorities in England and Wales and Scotland have been notified by the Home Office and Scottish Office that facilities for training policewomen both as constables and detectives are now available in the Police Training Schools of London, Birmingham and Glasgow.

### APPRECIATIONS IN 1938.

Speaking on the 4th June at the Policewomen's Conference in Eastbourne the Chief Constable, Mr. W. H. Smith said :

"The duties of a policewoman are important and responsible and she possesses tremendous opportunities for doing good. Policewomen have gradually acquired a reputation for usefulness and efficiency, and now they are looked upon in many forces as indispensable. They still suffer under a considerable amount of prejudice, a survival of the old fashioned antipathy to certain forms of female employment which used to be looked upon as the special prerogative of men." He was quite sure that policewomen had a great future. As pioneers in the work let them do their best to prove their indispensability.

The Chief Constable of Glasgow writes in his Report published in March 1938 :

"Splendid work is done in such cases (sexual offences and indecent assault) by policewomen who endeavour to keep in touch with the victims long after any case has been disposed of, and maintain an interest in their welfare.

"At the June sitting of the High Court in Glasgow five men were tried for indecent offences against young girls. They were convicted and received sentences of 7, 5, and 3 years, 21 and 18 months' imprisonment. At the conclusion of the trials the Presiding Judge and Advocate Deputy paid high tribute to the work of the policewomen in these cases."

*June 1938.*