

THE VOTE,  
MARCH 2, 1917.  
ONE PENNY.

**BY WHAT AUTHORITY?**

# THE VOTE

**THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE**

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FRIDAY, MARCH 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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## OUR POINT OF VIEW.

### The Prime Minister in Parliament.

The Prime Minister made one of his rare appearances in the House of Commons last Friday, and the public has been informed that so strong a dose of moving eloquence and vitality cannot be too frequently administered. The head of the Government will pay "Angels' visits" to the representatives of—the male portion of—the nation, and honourable gentlemen will brace themselves to receive him. Meanwhile, we are told that Mr. Lloyd George's days from 7 a.m., when he begins work, to 10.30 p.m., when he retires to rest, are full of affairs of State, and that people whom he wishes to see, are invited to breakfast, lunch, or dine with him. We suggest that a suffrage luncheon party, sandwiched in between meetings of the War Cabinet, would be a stimulating experience for the hard-working Prime Minister, and would bring home to him the immediate need for political freedom for the women of this country as well as for smaller nationalities abroad.

### No Apples for Adam or Eve.

The Prime Minister's "moving eloquence" brought distressful tidings to women, for it is they as caterers and food providers who are largely responsible for maintaining the vitality of the nation. In prohibiting or restricting imports of apples, tomatoes, oranges, bananas, grapes, nuts, tea, coffee, cocoa, etc., the Government is laying hands on the food of the multitude, not of the elect who will be able to gratify their tastes, and to whom such fruit is an addition to a meal after hunger has been satisfied. The nation is urged to practise meatless days, but excellent means for the purpose are being taken away. The nation is urged to economise expenditure and effort, but cheap articles of good food value, which may be eaten raw, or with a minimum of

cooking, are to be practically unobtainable. Some saving of tonnage will be achieved, at the cost of distinct loss of vitality, especially among the children in the mean streets. We understand that banana crates are generally brought to this country on the decks of meat and other steamers already fully loaded.

### For the Classes, not the Masses.

It seems to be the desire of the Government that the nation should "eat its way through" the meat stocks in the country—to quote the publicly spoken words of a representative of the Food Controller—before real economy in food is to begin. To send up to a shilling a pint the beer said to be so necessary for the working man is to legislate for the classes, not the masses. We may wonder how the Prime Minister's guests will be regaled in his official residence, for the shock to them will be severe if the prohibited fruits and drinks appear on his table after his "moving eloquence" of last week. If women had been responsible for economies in tonnage they would have left valuable foodstuffs untouched, and found other ways of accomplishing their end. It is to be noted that the word "tobacco" does not appear in the Prime Minister's speech.

### Soaring Prices.

Within an hour of the delivery of the famous speech grocers were charging increased prices for commodities in their possession. Last Monday, Mr. J. H. Thomas asked what the Food Controller would do. Captain Bathurst, his representative in the House of Commons, promised that "drastic action" would be taken. But before the Food Controller hears the facts the people are being fleeced. The same day Sir John Barran asked what was being done with regard to fixing retail prices of foods, of which there

are abundant stocks in the country. The only comfort he received from Captain Bathurst was a promise of "drastic action," and a shifting of responsibility on to the Press. If restrictions and prohibitions are to be enforced it is surely time to fix maximum prices for all essential commodities. Otherwise the result will be that a small section of the nation, amongst whom we may include those who made these regulations, will still be able to gratify their tastes at the expense of those to whom high prices render even common necessaries impossible.

#### Equal Opportunities.

We note with pleasure that in the new School of Oriental Studies—London's latest educational possession, acquired long after Paris, Petrograd, and Berlin have had similar institutions—opened by the King last Friday, there are to be equal facilities for men and women students, and that there are women as well as men professors. The Education Minister, Dr. H. A. L. Fisher, was in attendance on His Majesty, and Mrs. Fisher was present; both are good suffragists.

#### GREAT SUFFRAGE RALLY.

We hope to see a crowd of members and friends at the rally on Friday, March 2. Mrs. Despard, Miss Munro, Mr. John Scurr, Mrs. Whetton and Miss Underwood will be the speakers, and Miss Eunice Murray will take the chair. Representatives of the various branches will present the money collected for the 50,000 Shillings Fund to Mrs. Despard, who will, with the other members of the National Executive Committee, receive the guests. Refreshments will be served between 7 and 8, and Mrs. Goodall, Miss W. Cohen and Mrs. and Miss Van Raalte will contribute to the musical programme. Miss Alix M. Clark is providing a cake and candy stall.

#### WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE Campaign in Wales.

Our veteran campaigners, Miss Anna Munro, as principal speaker, and Miss Alix M. Clark, as organiser, will be busy in Wales during most of March. The meetings of the campaign appear this week in Forthcoming Events, and further particulars will be given next week. Miss Clark will be glad of any help members and friends can give, financial or personal, and asks them to write to her without delay at 11, Severn-street, Newtown, Montgomery Boroughs.

#### "ROMEO AND JULIET" AT THE BIJOU THEATRE.

Last Sunday afternoon Miss Clara Reed gave an excellent dramatic recital of "Romeo and Juliet," at the Bijou Theatre. Miss Reed has previously given us first-rate dramatic recitals from Ibsen's, Tennyson's, and Stephen Phillip's works, but we believe this was the first time she has attempted a Shakespearian recital, and the result was a triumph for her art. From start to finish the audience was delighted with her performance, and warmly responded to Mrs. Tanner's call for a vote of thanks at the end of the proceedings.

"HINDLE WAKES."—Miss Horniman gave last week at the Court Theatre, London, this powerful play by the late Stanley Houghton, and, watching its development as played by her excellent company, one regretted still more the early death of the author. It is to be hoped that it will be included in Miss Horniman's next season in London.

#### We draw your special attention to—

Friday, March 2.—Caxton Hall, 7 p.m. Suffrage Rally. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Mr. John Scurr, Miss Munro, Mrs. Whetton, and Miss F. A. Underwood. Chair: Miss Eunice Murray.

Wednesday, March 7.—Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speakers: The Rev. Warlow, on "Women and the Church," and Mrs. Mustard. Chair: Miss Eva Christy.

Friday, March 9.—Minerva Café, Debate on Education Economies. 6 p.m. Mr. H. A. Grimshaw v. Miss de Normann. Chair: Miss Agnes Dawson.

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## Women's Freedom League.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.



DARE TO BE  
FREE.

free. Tea can be obtained in the hall at 4.30 (6d.).

Friday, March 9.—Debate, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m. "That the Present Economies in Education are Desirable in the National Interest." Opener, Mr. H. A. Grimshaw. Opposer, Miss de Normann. Chair: Miss Agnes Dawson. Questions and discussion invited.

Saturday, March 10.—Clapham Branch, Recital of Folk Songs and Fairy Tales by Miss Anne Squire and Miss Katherine Raleigh, Wirtemberg Hall, Wirtemberg-street, Clapham, S.W., 3.30. London Branches Council Drawing Room Meeting at 94, Cambridge-gardens, West Kensington (by kind invitation of Miss Reeves), 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Cobden Sanderson.

#### PROVINCES.

Wednesday, March 7.—Chester, Public Meeting, Newgate Assembly Rooms, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro.

#### MONTGOMERY BOROUGH'S CAMPAIGN.

Thursday, March 8.—Abermule, Public Meeting, Dolforwyn School. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro; subject, "Social Evil." Chairman: Mr. E. B. Williams. 7 p.m.

Friday, March 9.—Llanddlyn Schoolroom, Public Meeting. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. Chairman: Miss Alix M. Clark. 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 10.—Oswestry, Open-air Meeting, Bailey Head. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. Chairman: Miss Alix M. Clark. 3 p.m. Llanfyllin, G.F.S. Meeting, Parish Room. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. 3 p.m. Tea will be provided. Oswestry Special Vote-selling Rally. Volunteers wanted. Write Miss A. M. Clark, Newtown.

Monday, March 12.—Welshpool, Drawing-room Meeting (by kind permission of Mrs. Bamrs), 3, Cobden-street. 6.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. Subject: "The Present Political Situation." Chair: Miss Alix M. Clark.

Tuesday, March 13.—Llansaintfrid, Public Meeting, Village Hall. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. Subject: "Social Evil." Chair: Miss Kate W. Evans. 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 15.—Pentre, Meifod, Drawing-room Meeting (by kind permission of Mrs. Cartwright). Speaker: Miss Anna Munro, on the "Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases." Chair: Mrs. Cartwright. 3 p.m.

Saturday, March 17.—Llanwchairan, Girls' Friendly Society, National Schools. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. 3 p.m.

Wednesday, March 21.—Aberystwyth, Public Meeting, Buarth Hall. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Miss Anna Munro. 7.30 p.m.

Friday, March 23.—Llanfyllin. "At Home," Town Hall. Mrs. Despard on Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," and Miss Anna Munro. Music and Refreshments. 3.30, 6.30 p.m.

Saturday, March 24.—Oswestry. Special Vote Sale Day. Welshpool, Public Meeting, Council Chamber, Town Hall. 7 p.m. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. Subject, "The Social Evil."

Tuesday, March 27.—Newtown, Open-air Meeting, High-street. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro. Chair: Miss Alix M. Clark. 2 p.m.

#### OTHER SOCIETIES.

Wednesday, March 7.—Glasgow. United Suffragists' Debate, Central Halls, 8 p.m. Mrs. Helen Crawford (U.S.), "Adult Suffrage," and Miss McLelland (W.F.L.), "Votes for Women on the same terms as men."

THEY SUPPORT US.

## POLITICAL NOTES.

### Franchise and Electoral Reform.

Judging from his replies to the questions asked in the House of Commons on February 20, on Franchise and Electoral Reform, Mr. Bonar Law has succumbed to the wiles of that legal phraseology which has clogged our politics for so long, and he bids fair to become a pastmaster in the art. The following is the official record:—

Mr. Peto asked the Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce proposals for legislation, at an early date, to carry into effect the recommendations at the Speaker's Conference with regard to electoral reform.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Bonar Law): It is clear that the House ought to have an early opportunity of deciding what action should be taken in connection with the Report of the Conference over which you, Sir, presided. After endeavouring to ascertain by unofficial inquiries what course would be most acceptable to the House, the Government have come to the conclusion that the best method of procedure would be that a Resolution, or Resolutions, embodying its decisions should be moved on behalf of the Conference. If a Motion to this effect be placed upon the Order Paper, the Government will give an early opportunity for its discussion.

Mr. Peto: May I ask the right hon. gentleman whether he proposes that the Resolutions should be proposed on behalf of the Government as well as on behalf of the Conference, and by a member of the Government?

Mr. Bonar Law: Obviously not. These Resolutions report the decision of the Conference. The first step to be taken—I have endeavoured to find out whether this is the view of the House—is that the House should have an opportunity of expressing its views upon this decision of the Conference.

Mr. Pringle: Is the Government in a position to give any guidance to the House?

Mr. Bonar Law: I think that it will be time enough when the Resolution has been submitted to the House.

Mr. Herbert Samuel: Does the right hon. gentleman contemplate that the Conference should meet again and draft a Resolution for submission to the House, and should select one of its Members to move it?

Mr. Bonar Law: I thought that it was not unreasonable to suppose that the Conference should take some such step in order to have the Resolutions put on the Order Paper as representing the views of the Conference.

Mr. Lough: If the House should carry the Resolution which my right hon. friend has suggested, will the Government be prepared to bring in a Bill?

Mr. Bonar Law: I think it is obvious that there would be no object in having this Resolution if we were to decide in advance exactly what was to be done.

Truly we have here "an Asquith come to judgment." Our old enemy in his most "anti" period could not have been more elusive. We were told when Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister that we were exchanging a "Wait and See" Government for one whose policy would be "Do it now." If this were true, nothing would please us better, but, strange to say, the motto "Do it now" with regard to women seems only to be used for the purposes of obtaining their work, but when we ask the Government to "Do it now" (i.e., enfranchise us), we are told to "Wait and see." The attitude adopted towards us by these people reminds us of the old parental saying: "Do as I say, not as I do."

#### The Latest Move.

"A non-party Committee of the House is at work with the object of bringing about a debate on the report of the Speaker's Conference on electoral reform," says the Parliamentary correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*. "Conservative and Liberal M.P.'s have met to exchange views. An invitation is to be sent to Mr. Asquith asking him to move a resolution urging the Government to legislate on the lines of the recommendations unanimously agreed to by the Conference. Woman's suffrage was not an agreed resolution; but no franchise Bill, whatever its original character, would pass through the House without this principle being embodied in it."

#### Women's Employment.

In the House of Commons on February 20:—

Mr. Rowntree asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the influx of women into industry, he will consider the

advisability of setting up a special expert Commission, as a preliminary to the work of demobilisation, to inquire into the effect of different employments on the health and physique of women and girls.

Sir G. Cave: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this question. The effects of the employment of women in the new industries into which they have been introduced during the war are being carefully noted by the inspectors of the Factory Department, and the information collected by the Department will be at the disposal of the Subcommittee of the Reconstruction Committee, which is considering the employment of women after the war. I do not think that any further expert inquiry is needed at the present time.

We do not think that expert inquiry is needed now or at any future time; if all these people who talk so much about the fitness of women for industry were to spend their time in making industry fit for women, something might be accomplished. It is nothing short of impertinence for a Government which allows women to work in munition factories for anything from 8s. a week to talk about inquiring into the fitness of women for their work. If women were given proper wages and conditions we could safely leave it to them to decide as to what work they could or could not do, and it is to be hoped that women workers will show strongly their resentment against such inquisitive surveillance.

ANNE E. CORNER.

#### OUR OPEN COLUMN.

\*\* Letters intended for publication must be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated by the name and address of the writer. It must be clearly understood that we do not necessarily identify ourselves with the opinions expressed.

#### The Future of "The Women's Freedom League."

DEAR EDITOR,—May I make some further suggestions in regard to the programme drawn up by your correspondents (Feb. 16)? Firstly, as to getting the vote, I agree that a campaign should be started in the main military and munition centres, but would like to point out that there is a danger of our being misunderstood. We are supposed to have made many friends of late—how sincere they are remains to be proved; there is, however, one thing of which we may be quite sure, and that is, that we still have our enemies, who, though very quiet just now, are not asleep. Care must be taken that they do not get the opportunity to misjudge our actions.

I also agree that the idea of a Women Voters' Organisation is a good one, and while being most willing to co-operate with a National Council or central body, I would most earnestly urge that we of the "Women's Freedom League" should preserve our own individuality. Other leagues and societies are sure to spring up, but there will be plenty of work to do and room for them all.

Why not use the "Freedom League" as a training centre for teaching women the duties of citizenship? We have splendid women in the League already carrying out these duties.

My proposal is that we call the new organisation "The Freedom League of Women Voters," thus retaining as much of the old name as possible. We could also use our paper—THE VOTE—for propaganda work; in that case a change of name, e.g., "The Freedom League Journal" might be necessary. Or, since "a rose by any other name smells as sweet," some of our members may think of a better title.

All this sounds rather like counting our chickens, etc., but it is much better to be prepared with definite plans than adopt the policy of drift, or "wait and see."—Yours sincerely,

MARY SOANE.

#### Victims of Violence.

A girl on a Yorkshire farm; a private resident at Southend-on-Sea, walking along a quiet road; and a conductor on a motor-bus, these are recent victims of man's violence.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 136.

## THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, March 2nd, 1917.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—  
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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.

International Suffrage Shop, 5, Duke-street, Charing Cross, W.C.; Messrs. Horace Marshall and Co., Temple-avenue, E.C.; City and Suburban Publishing Company, St. Bride's Churchyard, E.C.; E. Marlborough, Old Bailey, E.C.; A. Ritchie, Pemberton-row, Gough-square, E.C.; Simpkin, Marshall and Co., Orange-street, Haymarket; John Heywood, Manchester. Can be obtained at the Book-stalls of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son and all newsagents.

## STATE SERVICE:

### By What Authority?

For better or for worse the War Loan campaign is over. Presently, when the sum now subscribed is exhausted, there may be another. In the meantime our attention is to be directed towards the campaign for national, or, as we prefer to call it, State service. We are warned that if the result does not satisfy those in power after it has been given a certain time to work, resort will be had to industrial conscription, and this, in all probability, will include women.

Faced with issues so serious it will be the part of wisdom to clear our minds of misconception. We are asked to serve the State. What is the State?

To crude thinkers, of whom unfortunately there are too many, the State is composed of a body of bureaucrats, sitting at Westminster or elsewhere for the purpose of making and administering laws. Over them the King, a gracious figurehead with fine traditions behind him, who, for form's sake, registers their decrees. These hold the purse of the nation, make use of its resources, and pay for services rendered by the various groups or units of the community.

There could not be a greater mistake. The State is ourselves—sane and adult men and women. Ours are the State's resources, and to everyone of us belongs the duty of service and the right to be rewarded for the services we render. Cabinet Ministers are as much servants of the State as are the men and women to whose labour it is due that the nation is fed, clothed, sheltered and protected. We would go further. We believe that every member of the community or State is in duty and honour bound to render his or her meed of service, as a just return for benefits received; and one of the chief reasons for the present dislocation is that the male directors of the nation's activities have allowed a state of things to grow up in the Labour world which can only be described as anarchy.

By the heaping up of fortunes and the consequent growth of luxury thousands of men and women have been thrust into unproductive and, in the sense of State service, unprofitable work; those to whom it falls to do the really necessary work are severely overtasked, and a large minority which tends to increase do no work at all.

"Knowledge through sorrow entereth," said one of our woman poets. That it should have needed so fearful a tragedy as a great European war to bring this knowledge home to the nations is infinitely sad. It is our hope and prayer that when the full voice of the People is allowed to speak, when men and women together organise through wisdom and experience the life-work of the world, we shall have no more of these ghastly upheavals.

That belongs to the future. The present danger against which all women and men of goodwill must guard themselves is the policy of drift. Especially as regards State service. Let it be accepted that the State is the Government; let it be granted that the peril which threatens the nation is so imminent and immediate that everything, even liberty, must be surrendered to those who, having seized the helm of the State, promise to guide it safely to port; let us, in fine, throw to the winds all our ancient safeguards, and the result can easily be foreseen. When the necessity for special service is over, many pretexts will be found to persuade men and women that they are still essential. Domination, physical force, superiorities, sex-antagonisms, and favoured-nation tariffs will resume their sway; then, as has happened before, serious complications will arise. Those who have succeeded in the bitter game will crave for more worlds to conquer; those who have not will be persuaded that foreign peoples are barring their way, and after, it may be, many years of preparation war even more widespread and barbarous than the present will break out again.

That is the peril. How are we to treat it? It is impossible not to believe that women have an important part to play in the future that is opening out before the world; and the very first point they have to consider now is the attitude they should take up towards the campaign for so-called national service which is being carried on.

We know that, in many directions, attempts are being made by threats of what may happen in the event of their refusal to coerce women and girls into particular forms of industry. Thousands of women, as we know, are working in munition factories. They have adopted this service voluntarily. It may not be known that, while there are men who conscientiously object to combatant service, there are women who object to making implements of destruction. So there are other forms of industry for which they may not feel themselves to be fitted. They are ready, they are eager, to serve the community; but they hold to their freedom as individuals to choose the mode of service they will render, and to live in reasonable comfort on the products of their labour. Men, unhappily, have drifted. If women follow their example the great opportunity is lost.

Therefore let us be firm and strong. We will give freely and gladly; but we will not be compelled. In the meanwhile, holding ourselves in readiness for united action, when the moment for action arrives, and bearing in mind our responsibility to the race, let us form and diffuse some truer conception of the State, and of our duty towards it, than that which is generally held.

Certainly we have gone astray. The almost pitiful efforts of the recently formed departments to regulate the Labour and the resources of the country and their scant success should prove to all who have ears to hear the truth of the old Scriptural adage: "The way of transgressors is hard."

Labour has been turned into the wrong channels. The land has been wasted, desecrated, robbed. In place of joyful, freely-given service there has been compulsion. And now the only way to freedom—a higher and truer freedom than our nation has ever known—is the way of return.

It may be that when men have become worn out with the physical body to body combat which is de-

## THOUGH LATE FOR MARCH TWO YOU CAN STILL MARCH TOO

Take your share in the Great March to Victory. Do not wait; we cannot win without YOUR help. Give every shilling you can and bring or send to me anything saleable to be turned into money.

E. KNIGHT.

vouring their energies now another battle will be waged. If so, it will be spiritual. Into the nature and issues of that warfare we have not time to enter here. Possibly, as this is the Women's Freedom League, and as the great hope behind us is Freedom for women, to initiate and help forward the Freedom of the whole human family, we may deal with it in greater detail later. Now, we ask our readers and fellow-members not to be led away by any of the sophisms which they may hear.

We ourselves form an integral part of the living State. Freely we serve it. And that we can understand. When our service is forced; when we are ordered to take our share in munitions work, farm work, clerk work, when, through a new law framed without us, the right of sending us from place to place as these legislators may think fit is claimed, we ask: Who are these who order us, and how have they obtained their authority? Until that question is satisfactorily answered, we maintain our right of free action.

C. DESPARD.

## CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

The following letter has been sent to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, to other Members of the Government, and to the Press:—

### THE PERSECUTION OF PROSTITUTES.

The Women's Freedom League has carefully considered the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill now before the House of Commons.

There is a small amount of good in the Bill, but it is far outweighed by what is bad. We are glad to see that in the case of Indecency towards children the girl of 16 is put on the same level as the girl of 13, the consent of the child being no excuse for the offence in either case. We are glad, too, that the girl of 16 is to have increased protection against Criminal Assault by the removal of the present special loophole whereby assaulters are often acquitted because the girl injured looks older than her age. As these clauses, however, are inserted in the Bill as a substitute for raising the age of consent to 18, for which we have long asked, we cannot feel very much gratitude for them.

The Women's Freedom League is strongly opposed to the compulsory examination for venereal disease of any person, either in prison or out of it, and questions whether the Home Secretary has considered the difficulty of finding medical women who are willing to carry out these outrages upon women prisoners. The wilful transmission, or risk of transmission, of venereal disease is always a moral crime; the Bill makes it also a legal crime, punishable by imprisonment for not longer than two years. This will not aid the thousands of injured wives infected during marriage by their husbands; to make such infection a ground for divorce, with damages against the husband, as ought to be done, would give them some protection, but very few married women in their present state of economic dependence could afford, for themselves or their family, to dispense with the breadwinner, and many would hesitate to imprison the father of their children. This part of the Bill can only be practically operable in the case of prostitutes, but if this country is to see reintroduced the practice of finding out and shutting up those immoral women who are diseased, thereby giving the impression that those still on the streets have a clean Bill of Health, it must be done by a straightforward Contagious Diseases Bill, fully discussed and passed by our rulers, and not by sub-sections of a misleading "amendment" Bill, of whose real meaning the public is quite ignorant.

Any doubt that this is the real intention of the Bill will be cleared up by a study of the speeches of Honourable Members in the Official Report of the Debate on its Second Reading on February 19, which we shall be glad to forward upon application at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

The Bill provides very heavy penalties for the keepers of Disorderly Houses. The nominal keepers of these places are usually women, but there is almost always another person in the background, to whom most of the profits go, and it is these individuals and the landlords of the premises who should be penalised far more heavily than the person ostensibly in authority.

C. DESPARD, President.

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD, Secretary.

E. KNIGHT, Hon. Treasurer.

Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, W.C.

The obnoxious clauses of the Bill are also opposed by the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies,

the National Industrial and Professional Woman's Suffrage Society, the Free Church League for Woman Suffrage, the Northern Men's Federation for Woman's Suffrage, and by many prominent individual women. After the Second Reading of the Bill on February 19, the Committee Stage was fixed for February 27, but the motion to send it to a Standing Committee was carried after a division by 144 votes to 91. We shall keep a sharp look out for its re-appearance in the House of Commons.

### "Nothing Less Than Iniquitous."

In the debate on the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill Lieutenant-Commander Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme, L.) said he detested this sort of legislation, which was really intended for the persecution of prostitutes. There was great danger, no doubt, from these very loathsome diseases, but there was a better cure for them than passing Acts of Parliament, and that was not to go with prostitutes. This Bill was of the usual character. They were to have arrest by the police for loitering, conviction by the magistrate, then inspection, and then segregation. They would not get very far that way. The right hon. gentleman, who he was glad to thing was no longer Home Secretary, spoke about the criminality of infecting people with syphilis, but the real reason why this was not legally a crime was because it was impossible to get a conviction or find out who was the guilty party in the business. It was pretended, and it was only a pretence, that the law was to apply to men as well as to women, but in actual practice it would apply to women only; the man would go scot free as usual. The one clause which he approved was the raising of the age of consent. But that this House, which had no women represented in it, should pass legislation for the persecution of unfortunate women who had nobody to speak for them was nothing less than iniquitous.

### OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

#### Miss Abadam on "The Feminist Outlook."

Speaking last Wednesday at Caxton Hall on "The Feminist Outlook," Miss Abadam warmly congratulated the Women's Freedom League on keeping its meetings going during the war, and asked if anyone was quite so simple as to suppose that, because most suffrage societies had abandoned suffrage propaganda and pressure on the Government, the demand for suffrage was in any way lessened? If so, and if the authorities again showed bad faith as previously towards women, then the fight that women had put up before the war would be as nothing compared with their fight afterwards.

During the war there had been an enormous growth of individual feminist opinion; women were now feminists almost more than suffragists, but they could not forget that suffrage was the key to the position, the door to be knocked down, the bar to be shattered. Feminism, the speaker declared, was a larger thing than suffragism; it went from earth to heaven and was co-existent with humanity itself. What is the feminist demand? Is it law-making? The demand should be that all laws must harmonise with the life of the people and the con-

ditions under which they live, and, further, that there should be absolute equality of opportunity for men and women in every direction. Women have a right to everything England can give them, eligibility for every honour and emolument in the State, and equal access with men to making wealth. With regard to inheritance and title, why should not titles go to daughters as well as sons? In the future there would probably be very few men, and the law of inheritance would of necessity be altered. Referring to education, Miss Abadam said that women looked bitterly to Oxford and Cambridge. Why should they be merely straphangers in these universities? Was it because they competed too well against men? As for morals, the feminist demanded that when two people were guilty of an act, they should be treated as *equally* guilty. In this matter the woman suffrage platform had become the pulpit of the land. In dealing with eugenics, the speaker said that those who kept the law of the mother were free from disease, and that the over-sexing of humanity was the Herod of the modern child. She advocated that before a marriage could be legally ratified a certificate of good health for both parties should be signed by two medical men and two medical women.

With regard to war, had not the male sex ever been the fighting sex? Were not cocks, bulls, dogs, notorious fighters? And was it not midsummer madness, for this reason alone, that the fighting sex should have the sole control of the destinies of nations? As for peace, Miss Abadam asked that the men who were fighting abroad should not come back to fight the women at home in industry. Let them concede women's demand for a fair share of the whole yield of England's wages. It was virtual theft to keep women from earning a living. What would the feminist say to religion? The Bible contained many mistranslations which were detrimental to the position of women in the Church, and the feminist called for a truthful rendering of the Scriptures, which she was convinced would entirely do away with the superstition that man was the superior of woman. At present there was no office in Church or State which was not regulated by this superstition. It had done much to vitiate our fair world, and it was the task of feminism to break it down. The feminist was out to reverse all subjections of women and to make a revision of values. To man the world was an oyster; he had eaten the oyster, appropriated the pearls, and thrown the shells at women.

In professions and industry women were excluded wherever there was well-paid work. Had not lawyers met recently and by a large majority voted against women's eligibility for the Bar? And when the Germans were almost at our gates, had not Trade Unionists threatened to strike if women were allowed to share in their work? The genial taxi-man, too, had been kind enough to think about our physique, our souls and our moral risks, when he urged so eloquently that women should not be allowed to drive taxis. The Speaker's Conference was another example of the exclusion of women. Why were men so afraid of women's votes? Men had shown themselves very nervous of women's power, and was not being nervous next door to being hysterical? Men know that when women have political power they will not have quite so much liberty or license. Miss Abadam said that Woman's Age was now dawning. Feminism meant the regeneration of the world: it would do away with war as no other power could, with drink and with prostitution. It would mean a purer world, and women of the future would bring humanity again to the feet of God.

Mrs. Corner's enlightening speech on the political

situation was heard with keen interest. Mrs. Mustard presided, and urged the importance of continuing suffrage work.

### NO VOTE NO TAX.

On February 27, Dr. Patch, of Highbury (Women's Freedom League), made her second appearance at her public examination in the bankruptcy proceedings brought against her by the Inland Revenue Department, adjourned from February 6. The crowd of suffragist sympathisers was far larger than on the previous occasion, and included Mrs. Despard, Dr. and Mrs. Clark, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Mrs. Juson Kerr, Mrs. Ayrton Gould, Miss Brewster, Miss Smith Piggott, Miss Metcalf, Mrs. Kineton Parkes, Miss Raleigh, Mrs. Julia Wood, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Miss Gertrude Eaton, Mrs. Mustard, Mrs. Tanner, Miss Benett, and many others.

To vary the proceedings Dr. Patch offered this time to make an affirmation, and answer any questions which seemed to her to merit a reply. These were not very numerous. Dr. Patch then stated her position:—

"I do not acknowledge the authority of the Court, for it is being employed by the Crown not to fulfil its proper function of adjusting equitably the claims of creditor and debtor, but to enforce an unconstitutional demand, as did the Court of the Star Chamber 250 years ago.

"It is to the British Constitution that the British Empire owes its place among the leading nations of the world, and it is the duty of her children to whom her honour is dear to keep her true to those principles. I was a tax resister before the outbreak of the war. The political truce with the Government was tacitly accepted by suffragists, and this would have prevented me from beginning tax resistance after war broke out. I have paid no taxes for many years, and it is a breach of faith of the Government to have just started proceedings against me now. By taking my money which is at my bank you only prevent me from putting it into War Loan, as I intended to do.

"As regards the money left to me by my brother, who fell a few months ago, gallantly fighting for our country, I do not know whether you wish to take this from me. I am a suffragist, I love my country, but I claim the right to give to my country in my own way what she has no right to take from me by force until women are represented in the Councils of the nation. I ask that the judgment of bankruptcy against me be annulled."

The Court adjourned the proceedings for another fortnight, pending the receipt of the signed statement of particulars from Dr. Patch, which the authorities are so anxious to add to their documents. Further developments will be announced.

### Luncheon to Dr. Patch at Headquarters

After the proceedings at Bankruptcy-buildings, Dr. Patch was entertained at headquarters to luncheon, for providing which the Minerva Cafe added to its crown of laurels. Mrs. Despard presided over a large gathering of supporters. She expressed, amid applause, the warm appreciation and admiration of all for Dr. Patch's service to the great cause of Votes for Women. Dr. Clark praised the ability she has displayed in her plucky action, and declared that no class which possesses power gives in without a struggle. Mrs. Kineton Parkes pointed out the heavy cost at this time of her sacrifice for conscience' sake, and hoped that a memorial would tell future generations of Dr. Patch's service to the cause of Votes for Women. After short speeches from Miss Evelyn Sharp and Mrs. Mustard, Dr. Patch thanked everyone for their support, and used the words of the late Professor Kettle as expressing the attitude of unenfranchised women:

"Bound in the toils of hate we may not cease,  
Free, we are free to be your friends."

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### WOMEN IN WAR TIME.

Lord Buckmaster introduced into the House of Lords on February 20 a Bill removing the disqualification of women to practise as solicitors; it passed the second reading on February 27.

#### To Join the Army in France.

Women will be substituted for men wherever possible in the Army, both in this country and France. A branch of the Adjutant-General's Department has been formed at Devonshire House, under Colonel Leigh-Wood and Mrs. Chalmers-Watson, M.D., to deal with women, who must first enrol with Mrs. Tennant, Director of Women's National Service, St. Ermin's Hotel.

#### Compulsion for German Women.

According to cabled messages, thousands of German women have refused to be compelled to take the places of their husbands on tramway services, and are being vilified for want of patriotism.

### IN PARLIAMENT.

Mr. Anderson (in the debate on the National Service Bill): "There are very grave objections to the conscription of industry. There are very grave objections to any Minister having compulsory powers over labour. Those objections are grave in the case of men. They are still more grave in the case of women. Personally, I believe that the only large reserve available is that of women labour, and it seems to me that has been rather put into the background than in the forefront. . . . I think it is quite wrong that women who have gone into controlled establishments to do certain work should then be compelled to undertake work of a most dangerous character, putting the position of the volunteer worker into practically that of a conscript worker."

Mr. Runciman (in the debate on Food and Shipping): "In a great many parts of the country it is an urgent necessity that more women should be attracted on to the land. If it can be done by higher wages, let those higher wages by all means be paid."

"In regard to women in agriculture, are they to have the same minimum as paid to the men? Apparently they are. My view is, generally speaking, that women should be paid sixpence an hour for, at any rate, a minimum number of hours in view of the liability to broken time."—MR. A. HENDERSON.

"There is one thing that women can do, not only as well but very much better than men, and that is milking cows."—MR. LAMBERT.

### WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE. Work in War—and Peace—Time.

The Nine Elms Settlement since the beginning of the war has provided excellent vegetarian dinners at 1d. and 1½d., and has been an object lesson in many ways of the practical work of suffragists. The Children's Guest House, unique in London, takes in children while their mothers are ill.

The Despard Arms is an object lesson of how the public-house may be a blessing to the community by providing for food and drink (no alcohol) and recreation; a people's club. Soldiers are now billeted there.

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

Readers of THE VOTE are reminded that they can materially help the work of the Settlement by gifts for the Sale which is being organised by Mrs. P. H. Miller at 1, Campden Hill-road, Kensington, W., on March 14. All kinds of useful and pretty articles, provisions, garden produce, and flowers will be gratefully received by Mrs. Miller at the above address, or by Miss Holmes at the Settlement. Miss Barbara Clark has already sent us a contribution, and other gifts for the Settlement are acknowledged from Mrs. Giles, Mrs. Harry Hague, Mrs. Clark, and Miss Riggall.

#### The Despard Arms, 123, Hampstead-road, N.W.

"Just what is wanted by soldiers and sailors—a happy meeting-place where they can have a good meal with their women relatives—who cannot go to the Huts—and enjoy a sing-song!" This is a welcome tribute from men who appreciate the Despard Arms. Who will help to make the place more attractive by supplying books, newspapers (daily and weekly), games, etc., and such necessaries as bed and table linen, especially strong towels, tablecloths, and tea-cloths. Will an engineering friend advise as to hot-water supply?

### BRANCH NOTES.

#### Clapham

A branch meeting was held at 15, Clapham Mansions. Mrs. Corner presided, and two new members were welcomed. The branch accepted, with regret, the resignation of Miss Underwood, and appointed as Joint Honorary Secretaries in her stead Misses D. V. Wearne and E. M. Lawrence. Arrangements were made for the Recital of Fairy-tales by Miss K. Raleigh and Folk-Songs by Miss Anne Squire, on Saturday, March 10, at Wirtemberg Hall (Wirtemberg-street, near "The Plough," Clapham), at 3.30 p.m. All members of the Women's Freedom League are invited, and are asked to bring their friends.

#### Glasgow Suffrage Shop, 212, Bath Street.

A lecture on "How I Escaped from Ruhlleben," by Mr. Geoffrey Pyke, drew a good audience on February 24. The lecturer was introduced by Sir Samuel Chisholm in a short but pithy speech. Miss Murray announced from the chair that the total drawings were to be handed over to the Prisoners of War (Local Committees), the expenses having been raised in advance by collections and appeals. THE VOTE sold very well. Our sincere thanks are due to Hengler's, Ltd., for the use of the Circus, very especially to Mr. Milne, manager, a P.O.W. enthusiast, for much valuable assistance, and to his staff for their services rendered ungrudgingly without remuneration; to the Corporation Tramways Department, and to numerous music-halls and picture-houses for showing bills and slides respectively; to Mr. R. M. Black for Press work, and to our generous subscribers who helped to raise expenses. It is expected that the sum handed over will reach three figures.

#### Golders Green.

The branch held a drawing-room meeting, by kind invitation of Miss Hodge, on February 24, when we were fortunate enough to have Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Mustard to speak. Mrs. Mustard dealt with the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and showed that, though there were one or two clauses which we welcomed, we must be on our guard against dangers in others. The present political situation was described by Mrs. Despard as very tangled. Although there is a strong revival of suffrage activity, yet in reality neither men nor women are represented at the present time in Parliament, and many of our liberties are being filched. Mrs. Despard outlined the work of the League during the last few months, and ended with an appeal to women not to slacken until the present political helplessness of women is remedied.

#### Hackney.

A very interesting Branch meeting was held on February 18, at 49, Moresby-road, when Mrs. Corner spoke on "The Political Situation." We are deeply indebted to her for her lucid speech and hope to have the pleasure of hearing her again soon. THE VOTE sold well, a good collection was taken, and four new members joined us. Miss Waddington was elected hon. secretary and Mrs. Holmes hon. treasurer of the branch; both were warmly thanked for undertaking the work. The following resolution was carried unanimously: "That the Women's Freedom League, through its branches, calls upon the Government to lose no time in introducing a Bill, the effect of which will be to give women the Parliamentary vote on the same terms as men, and to give facilities for the passing of the Bill into law."

#### Middlesbrough Suffrage Club, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

Lord Haldane, speaking in Stockton on February 25, received urgent wires from North Yorks suffragists to advocate votes for women. The question was also much in the air owing to the band of women selling THE VOTE at the doors. Resolutions went up to Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Henderson in a steady stream last week from the Trades Council, women's meetings, and a meeting for munition and other workers, at which various Trades Unions, such as Municipal Employees and Railwaymen, were represented among the speakers. A meeting for Miss Eunice Murray is to be fixed for next week. Members are asked to call at the office for particulars.

#### Swansea.

At a recent meeting of the Branch it was decided to hold a Jumble Sale towards the end of April. Will members kindly do all in their power to make the Sale a success, and begin at once to collect articles for it? The annual meeting has been arranged for March 29, when it is hoped all members will make a special effort to be present.

### London Branches Council.

The London Branches Council was very pleased to welcome London members, old and new, to the At Home at the Minerva Café on February 19. After a social hour, Mrs. Corner took the chair, and explained that the meeting was held in order to impress upon London members the necessity of keeping up suffrage work. Mrs. Mustard enlarged upon this idea, and pointed out that we must not only press for enfranchisement, but must keep a watch upon such legislation as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, now before the House. Members were then invited to give their views.

FRIDAY,  
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**MISCELLANEOUS—cont.**

**BRITISH DOMINIONS WOMAN  
SUFFRAGE UNION.**—Ten Lec-  
tures 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.

**MISCELLANEOUS—cont.**

**THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM  
LEAGUE** will hold Public Meet-  
ings at the Caxton Hall, Westminster,  
every Wednesday afternoon, at 3 o'clock.  
March 7, the Rev. C. Warlow on  
"Women and the Church." Mrs.  
Mustard. Chair: Miss Eva Christy.

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