

JUS SUFFRAGII.

The International Woman Suffrage News

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FRENCH EDITION.

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Bye-law of I.W.S.A. Constitution.

"The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, by mutual consent of its auxiliaries, stands pledged to preserve absolute neutrality on all questions that are strictly national."

Notice on the Policy of Jus Suffragii.

In the present critical position of affairs, when any reference to political conditions may hurt national susceptibilities, it must be clearly stated that the International Woman Suffrage Alliance maintains a strictly neutral attitude, and is only responsible for its official announcements. Reports from affiliated societies are inserted on the responsibility of the society contributing them. Other articles are published as being of general interest to our readers, and responsibility for them rests solely with their signatories.

FEATURES OF THE MONTH.

As our April number went to press, we received the news of the first victory for woman suffrage in South Africa, where the Wyndham motion passed the Union Parliament by 44 votes to 42; the first time that any woman suffrage resolution has passed the South African Legislature. It is hoped that the Government will introduce a bill to give effect to the principle now accepted.

The suffrage question in South Africa is complicated with racial questions, the fear of the coloured vote and Dutch indifference, though the motion was seconded by a Dutch member. The proposal was first before the Union Parliament in 1912, when it was rejected by 70 votes to 30. In 1917 it was again defeated by 63 votes to 28. Mr. Wyndham's motion was the fifth occasion on which the franchise question was raised.

A further important gain is the granting of the communal vote to all Belgian women, and the Parliamentary vote to war widows, or, failing the widow, to the mother of fallen soldiers, and to the women who suffered imprisonment for patriotic acts during the occupation. Although this falls far short of the demands of the Belgian women, who can only be satisfied with complete political equality, it nevertheless constitutes a very important advance. The idea of sex disqualification is killed. The absurdity of conceding direct political power to certain categories of relatives of certain men is so obvious that it must lead, within a measurably short time, to an extension. Meanwhile the fiction that voting is a masculine attribute, for which women are constitutionally unfitted, will be dispelled, the public will grow accustomed to women's participation in political meetings and their presence at elections, the majority of women who are still unenfranchised will realise that they are as capable of holding an opinion on subjects of public importance and of giving practical effect to their views as those privileged women whom they see exercising what should be a common right. Then, again, whereas about 30,000 women will be entitled to vote now, they will

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Obviously be a decreasing number, as they hold their right to vote on a purely individual basis and it dies with them. Belgian women will not be willing to tolerate a diminishing woman's vote. The Belgian franchise is also important as being the first enfranchisement of women of the Latin races. To the administrative or communal vote these limitations happily do not apply, and its universal exercise by Belgian women is bound to have useful results, both for its direct action on local government and for its educative value on the women themselves, whom it will accustom to public activities and administrative problems.

The action and reaction of local and national politics is important, and in Great Britain it is interesting to note the greatly increased participation of women in local government since they received the political vote. Whereas before the recent elections only 12 women had seats on county councils, the number is now increased to 46.

This month marks another and an epoch-making event in the history of woman suffrage. The first step has been taken in the great continent of Asia. The Oriental woman is no longer cut off from the tide of women's emancipation. In Palestine the Jewish Provisional Assembly called to make arrangements for the election of a National Constituent Assembly has decided that women shall vote for it on the same terms as men. In all countries of Europe Jewish women have played an active part in the agitation for woman suffrage, as indeed their race plays an active part in all movements for liberation. The fact that their race and religion are scattered over all countries gives them a rare opportunity to rise above national narrowness and passion and to form a link between all countries. Now they are once more to have a home of their own, a racial centre, and it is a fitting and beautiful tribute to the mothers of their race that on re-establishing a national hearth they give their women an equal place by it.

The world owes much to the Jewish woman—it owes her a debt for all she has done in maintaining a high standard in the home, for her self-sacrificing ideal of motherhood, and it owes her a debt for all she has suffered throughout the centuries in the persecution of her race.

May the enfranchisement of the women of Palestine open a new era of happiness and progress for the Jewish woman. May the torch be quickly handed on to other Eastern countries, and may the example of this first Asiatic community to free its women spur on those governments in Europe, America, and Africa, which still keep their women in political helotage!

The League of Nations is now an established fact, and the recognition accorded in it to women is due to the valuable activities of the Inter-Allied Suffrage Conference in Paris, with which, in the latter stages, Lady Aberdeen has co-operated as representing the International Council of Women.

It is naturally a cause for regret that the International Woman Suffrage Alliance has not officially taken part in this valuable work; nevertheless the important thing is that the work should have been done, and in one sense the I.W.S.A. has been included in the work, as the suffrage bodies which have been represented have been the French, Belgian, Italian, and British societies, which are affiliated to the I.W.S.A., whose representatives, together with some leading American suffragists, have succeeded in placing the views of organised women before the Commissions of the Peace Conference.

The Inter-Allied Conference has now finished its labours, and women suffragists all over the world owe them gratitude for their able presentation of the suffrage case.

The delegates have been received by the Commission on the League of Nations presided over by President Wilson, and in the short space of time allotted to them pressed their resolutions for the complete emancipation of women in all countries.

The plenipotentiaries were urged to secure:—

- (1.) Full representation to women's nominees on all bodies of the League of Nations.
- (2.) Abolition of all state regulation of vice, suppression of the traffic in women, the right of women in every land to full liberty in marriage;
- (3.) The recognition of the principle of woman suffrage;
- (4.) The establishment of international bureaux of education and hygiene; and
- (5.) General disarmament.

Many of the points made by the speakers were effective.

Thus, Mrs. Corbett-Ashby, in urging plenipotentiaries to secure, each in their own country, the nomination of women to the council and commissions of the League of Nations, a right which has been granted in principle but must be carried out in practice, laid stress on the importance of accepting nominations from women's societies, otherwise women chosen by governments may not be really representative of women but only of the government.

Mme. Grinberg pleaded the cause of Oriental women, whose status she has studied, and showed the entire lack of individual freedom which existed for the women of many countries, and the need that individual as well as national self-determination should be guaranteed under the League of Nations.

Mme. Avril de Ste. Croix drew a forcible parallel and contrast between the secluded women of the East and the women outcasts of civilisation, equally in need of justice. (A book which has recently appeared in France by an Armenian dancer expresses the astonishment and condemnation of Easterners for the treatment meted out to the unfortunate in Europe.)

In supporting the suffrage resolution, Mme. de Witt Schlumberger impressed her audience by deploring the unfortunate impression produced by the reluctance of stable governments to enfranchise women, compared with the readiness of revolutionary governments to admit them to equal citizenship.

Miss Margery Fry, who has been working in the devastated regions of France for two years with the Society of Friends, supported the claim for woman suffrage by a description of all that women had suffered from invasion on the one hand and from hunger on the other.

Finally, Mme. Jules Siegfried demanded general disarmament on behalf of women, in the interests of humanity and the future of the race.

It has further been decided that women shall form part of the permanent International Labour Bureau which the Peace Congress proposes to establish.

This intervention of women in the deliberations of the Powers in Paris is of great historic importance, being the first time that women's claims have received international recognition.

MARY SHEEPSHANKS.

TREASURER'S RECEIPTS.

AFFILIATION FEES.				
Name.	Country.	Year.	£	s. d.
National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	2	0 0
Union pour le Suffrage des Femmes.....	France.....	1919.....	2	0 0
Danske Landsforbundet for Kvinders Valgret.....	Denmark....	1919.....	2	0 0
Association Suisse pour le Suffrage Féminin.....	Switzerland	1919.....	1	0 0
Landskvindestemmeretsforening.....	Norway.....	1919.....	1	0 0
HONORARY ASSOCIATES' SUBSCRIPTIONS.				
Name.	Country.	Year.	£	s. d.
Miss E. M. Zimmern.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. Osler.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss S. A. Villiers.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss D. Lawrence.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. R. E. Seyd.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
The Lady Abernethy.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss A. M. Royden.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	2	0 0
Mrs. C. M. Wilson, O.B.E.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss M. Chadwick.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	1 0
Miss K. D. Courtney.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss J. O. Ford.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Lady Wright.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss E. V. Eckhardt.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. F. Marshall.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss C. E. Marshall.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. W. E. Dowson.....	Gt. Britain.	1918/19..	2	0 0
Miss E. Ford.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. F. Richardson.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss A. M. Dowson.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. E. Snowdon.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. C. Fyfe.....	Gt. Britain.	1919.....	1	0 0
Mme. de Witt Schlumberger ..	France.....	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. S. v. den Bergh.....	Holland.....	1919.....	1	0 0
Miss L. R. Leman.....	Holland.....	1919.....	1	0 0
Mrs. H. Schöffer.....	Holland.....	1919.....	1	0 0
Acknowledged in April.....			£36	1 0
Total.....			88	8 0
			£124	9 0

"The International Woman Suffrage News."

THANKS TO MRS. HUSTED HARPER AND MISS SCHLINGHEYDE.
Warmest thanks are once again due to Miss Clara Schlingheyde for her skill and energy in securing 100 new subscribers. This additional support was due to the very successful efforts made at the St. Louis Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. New subscribers will have noted that the March number contained no report from the United States. This unfortunate omission was due to the necessity of going to press earlier than usual in order to get the copies to America in time for the St. Louis Convention. Mrs. Ida Husted Harper, the valued correspondent of the *I.W.S.N.* in the United States, sent off her letter on the date agreed upon, and it is much regretted that the earlier date of publication prevented its use until the April number. Mrs. Harper is, unfortunately for her readers, obliged to temporarily suspend her communications owing to the task she is engaged in of completing her history of woman suffrage in America. We seize this opportunity of recording our deep gratitude for the admirable articles she has contributed, which have given other countries a full and lucid account of the situation in America.

BELGIUM.

First Victory.

1. Universal woman suffrage for the commune.
2. Limited suffrage for the elections to the approaching National Assembly.

On April 10 the Chamber voted the law fixing the composition of the new electoral body for the next Constituent Assembly.

The Liberal and Socialist parties demanded the abolition of plural voting and the lowering of the age limit to 21. The Catholic party was disposed to support universal suffrage pure and simple on condition that it was really universal and extended equally to women. The Liberal Left opposed this with implacable hostility, which prevented the Socialists from supporting the amendment of the Right. After long debates the parties came to an agreement with the object of maintaining in power the Ministry of National Union. This Ministry, half composed of elements of the Left, had declared that it would resign if the Right used its feeble majority to impose woman suffrage.

To avoid a crisis at this moment when nothing must distract the attention of our Government from foreign politics, the Right sacrificed its hopes, and also its interests. It contented itself with the feeble concession made by its adversaries on the legislative field: the granting of the vote—

(1.) To all widows of soldiers or civilians killed by the enemy, or, where there is no widow, to the mother.

(2.) To all women condemned or imprisoned for patriotic acts during the enemy occupation.

On the other hand, with regard to woman suffrage for communal elections, our victory is complete, thanks to the agreement come to between the Right and the Socialist group.

A number of members of Parliament have declared that this first success would have been much more difficult to gain without the propaganda organised by our Federation for five months. Our petition has been signed now by over 175,000. Our friends, both men and women, have carried on an active campaign in the Press. When the attitude of the Liberal party rendered complete victory impossible, we asked to be received by a delegation of the three groups in the Chamber. We then proposed to them a conciliatory formula restricting the vote in the coming elections to women in the following categories:—

(1.) The granting to mothers of families the supplementary vote granted to married men under the system of the plural vote, a vote which constituted indirect representation of the interests of wife and children.

(2.) The granting the vote to all women of 21 years who have a certificate of general education, or who occupy situations presupposing a good education.

Liberal opposition led to our proposal being shelved. When during the last session we were officially asked whether we were satisfied with the slight concessions of the Left, we declared we would accept it as an instalment, preferring to see complete victory deferred rather than risk a crisis which might compromise the general interests of our country.

We shall redouble our propaganda, and are convinced that the breach which has been opened will be considerably enlarged after the constitutional revision.

JANE BRIGODE, President.
LOUISE VAN DEN PLAS, Secretary.

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

The measure, by which the vote is given to some 30,000 Belgian women, should not be claimed as a success for the Suffrage movement. It is merely a move in the game of political parties. When, after the evacuation of Belgium, a new Cabinet was formed, the Socialists made it one of their conditions for joining that equal manhood suffrage should be the first point on the new Government's programme. In this demand they had the support of the Liberal party. But the Conservatives, who would be greatly weakened by the introduction of equal manhood suffrage instead of the plural vote which kept them in power, tried to save themselves by giving the vote to women. Women in Belgium are predominantly Catholic, and will certainly vote Conservative. For this reason the parties of the Left opposed the woman suffrage amendment. After heated debates and a threatened ministerial crisis, a compromise was found by which a vote was given (1) to the widows of soldiers killed in action, or to their widowed mothers; (2) to women who have been imprisoned or deported during the German occupation.

A woman correspondent writes to the *Amsterdam Volk*: The franchise which has now been granted to war widows and mothers of killed soldiers is another of the nefarious consequences of the war. Thus is woman suffrage coupled in a monstrous way with perpetual war. Will the Belgian women really receive this franchise with enthusiasm? When a similar plan was put forward in France, the Socialist women protested. They, whose hearts had been pierced by a thousand arrows, declined the suffrage offered as a reward for having given sons and husbands to the devouring war-god. They refused this offending generosity, and called it a return to the old idea—that woman is merely a reflection of man. In this way woman suffrage is entirely maimed in its principle; for what does it mean if it is not—the Right of Woman?

It may be observed, however, that the new law can turn out to be the thin end of the wedge. But what seems imperative is that an intensive propaganda among women should enlighten them, and put an end to the terror with which the progressive parties anticipate their complete enfranchisement.

J. G. R.

DENMARK.

SHELVED!

The bill before the Rigsdag, opening all official positions (military positions only excepted) to Danish women, has excited great interest. It is especially the admission of women to the priestly office that has roused attention. . . . Now the bill has been shelved while the empty wagons of party politics roll on. . . . It is hoped that a state of things which has disgusted the whole country and all the better politicians the last few weeks will be put an end to, and that the bill for the admission of women will again be able to come on in its turn.

—*Tidens Kvinder* (March 29).

PEACE MOVEMENT.

Tidens Kvinder, after announcing that the first International Women's Congress after the war will be held in Switzerland in May, says in its leader:—

This announcement will awaken joy and hope in the hearts of many Danish women. During the war about 12,000 Danish women formed themselves into a Danish Women's League of Peace, which became a member of the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace, formed at The Hague during the war, in April, 1915.

Since the armistice in November, 1918, there have been attempts to gather together an International Women's Congress, but this has hitherto proved impossible. Now the difficulties seem to have been overcome. . . .

The Danish section for the International Committee for Permanent Peace is in these days in active communication with the women from other countries. Lately it has sent two representatives—Bargit Heilesen and Thora Daugaard—to a meeting in Göteborg, where representatives from the Scandinavian Women's Peace organisations were present.

It is intended also to hold a preliminary meeting in Copenhagen before the representatives go to Berne.

—*Tidens Kvinder* (April 5).

MAINTENANCE LAW.

A bill is proposed for a reform of the marriage laws. The existing law makes it obligatory for a man to support his wife, but not a woman her husband. But on the other hand it lays down no rules as to the manner in which the husband contributes his support. The proposed law makes their obligation as to support mutual. Personal work in the home is recognised as a contribution to the support of the house. The

wife is not only provided for; she shares in providing for the home. The existing law in practice only recognises the husband as the guardian of the children. The proposed law is to give equal rights to the parents.

—*Tidens Kvinder* (April 12).

FRANCE.

The Inter-Allied Conference in Paris.

February 10, April 10: These two dates will count in the history of feminism of the allied countries and of the United States. The first marks the opening of the Inter-Allied Suffrage Conference, the second the close of its labours after the delegation, side by side with the representatives of the International Council, had been received by the Commission of the League of Nations, presided over by President Wilson. At the end of March the work of the delegates of the conference and of the Council (I.C.W.) was pursued actively in the sections. Lady Aberdeen, president of the International Council of Women who arrived in Paris after the International Commission on Labour Legislation had received the women representatives, attended some of our own meetings, and it was at her rooms at the Hotel Ritz that the delegation was prepared which was to be received by the Commission of the League of Nations. We awaited, not without impatience, the convocation of the Commission, whose labours, as announced by the newspapers, were approaching an end. Already the members of the commission of responsibilities had separated without having heard us. We had strongly desired to present a request to it, which, in spite of all, we addressed to the Peace Conference.

An Armenian, Mme. Zabel Essayan, had come indeed to one of our sections to read a report on the terrible situation of the women of Armenia and Macedonia taken by the Turks during the war and still detained in harems and houses of prostitution. As a result of the report it seemed to us necessary to draw up the following resolution and to direct all our efforts to having it carried out.

(1.) That every woman or child who has been deported or carried away during the war shall be sought out immediately and restored to her family.

(2.) That a mixed inter-Allied Commission endowed with official powers shall be appointed to conduct an inquiry in the countries where women and children are still sequestered or detained, with a view to their liberation.

(3.) That the responsibilities for such crimes should be established and that women who have suffered damage should be entitled to indemnity or their families in their place.

Unfortunately this resolution has not been considered. We regret it all the more as the fate of about 200,000 women is involved, awaiting liberation which will perhaps never come.

Finally, on April 8, Lady Aberdeen and Mme. de Witt Schlumberger were informed that the delegates of the International Council of Women and of the Inter-Allied Suffrage Conference would be received on April 10, at 8 p.m., by the League of Nations Commission.

A little before the time fixed, we met at the Hotel Crillon, where the commission sits: Lady Aberdeen, Mme. de Witt Schlumberger, Mme. Siegfried, Mme. Avril de Ste. Croix, Mme. Alphen Salvador, Mrs. Corbett-Ashby, Mrs. Juliet Barrett Rublee, Miss Margery Fry, Mme. Brunschwig, Mme. Marie Vêrone, Mme. Puech, Mme. Tivoli, Mme. Schiavoni, Mrs. Fern Andrews, Dr. Gerard Mangin, Mme. Suzanne Grinberg.

Before being introduced we are asked to be as brief as possible in explaining our views. On our entrance President Wilson shakes hands with each of us. Colonel House, Signor Orlando, Lord Robert Cecil, M. Venizelos, M. Hymans, M. Léon Bourgeois, M. Vesnitch, etc., are there.

Lady Aberdeen, in a speech expressing her emotion as president of a delegation representing millions of women, speaking to men representing millions of men, thanks the members of the commission for receiving us and assures them of women's support for a League of Nations, and their wishes for its realisation. "We think" she says, "that thanks to our organisations we have the power to help you by extending and applying the principles of a League that you are now establishing, and by convincing the women of all countries that by this means they and their families can hope to be saved in the future from the horrors we have lived through."

President Wilson then called upon Mrs. Corbett-Ashby (Great Britain) and Mrs. Rublee (United States), who thanked the commission for having decided, according to the wish we

had expressed, that women should form part of the committees and officials of the League. They asked the plenipotentiaries to do their utmost "that not only theoretically but practically women chosen from names presented by women's associations should work with them."

Mme. Suzanne Grinberg, advocate (France), then explained the following resolution:

MORAL QUESTIONS.

Whereas certain countries still maintain laws and customs which practically keep their women in a state of slavery:

(a) That they decide the fate of children by promising them in marriage at an early age;

(b) By the toleration of either the openly avowed or privately arranged sale of women;

Whereas the countries represented at the Peace Conference must recognise not only the right of nations, but also of individual citizens;

Whereas the special measures taken under pretext of public health or public safety with regard to women who are, or are suspected of being, prostitutes, finally achieve the entire degradation of these unhappy creatures, are a danger to public health in creating a false feeling of security in a dissolute life, and are thus themselves an incentive to disorder and immorality;

The International Council of Women and the Conference of Women Suffragists of the Allied Countries and the United States petition as follows:—

(1) To suppress the sale of women and children.

(2) To respect and apply the principle of woman's liberty to dispose of herself in marriage.

(3) To suppress the traffic in women, girls, and children of both sexes, and its corollary, the licensed houses of ill-fame.

The section of Moral Legislation had charged Mme. Grinberg to report on the condition of women in India, Mahomedan countries, China and Japan. In some of the countries a husband may give his wife and children as pledges to a creditor, a father can legally sell or hire his daughters as a kind of slaves, handed over for hard labour, or as inmates of immoral houses. Finally, the text of laws allowing the father to betroth his daughter while still in the cradle and without her even seeing her husband.

The delegates of the suffrage conference and of the international council thought it their duty to plead the cause of these women, who cannot make their voices heard.

Mme. Avril de Ste. Croix who has for many years been on the committee of the International Association for repression of the traffic in women, then asked that states entering the League of Nations should undertake to repress and punish severely the traffic in women, minor or adult, to suppress its corollary, tolerated houses, and to protect children of both sexes from the moral point of view.

Then Miss Margery Fry (Great Britain), and after her, Mme. de Witt Schlumberger (France), supported the following resolution:—

SUFFRAGE.

Whereas the Peace Conference concerns the whole human race, as well women as men, and that from this Conference we trust there will issue the reign of lasting peace and the recognition of the right of peoples to a free self-determination;

Whereas no one can esteem himself authorised to speak in the name of the peoples so long as women, who constitute half the human race, are excluded from the political life of the nations;

Whereas those women who lack the suffrage are without a voice in the Government of their country, and that it is profoundly unjust that they can take no part in decisions which may issue in peace or war, decisions determining a future of which they, without a share in the responsibility, must bear the consequences;

Whereas, though not combatants, they play an essential part in war, since by giving their sons for the defence of their country they furnish what may be called "human material";

Whereas, on the other hand, women have during the war shown the value of their work and their social activity;

Whereas the participation of mothers and wives in the suffrage would be one of the best guarantees for future peace;

Whereas the status of women has ever been recognised as the criterion of civilisation and freedom in States;

The International Council of Women and the Conference of Women Suffragists of the Allied Countries and the United States of America petition as follows:—

(1.) That the principle of woman suffrage should be proclaimed by the Peace Conference and the League of Nations,

so that it may be applied all over the world as soon as the degree of civilisation and democratic development of each nation shall permit.

(2.) That in all plébiscites to decide the nationality of a state women as well as men should be called upon to pronounce on the fate of their country.

Mme. Schiavoni (Italy) and Mrs. Fern Andrews (United States) were then called upon and demanded:—

EDUCATION.

Whereas a League of Nations should be not only an instrument of peace but also an instrument of civilisation.

Whereas for the maintenance of a League of Nations it is essential to teach children from an early age to understand its usefulness and its benefits and to respect its aims;

Whereas the true freedom of men and women can only be gained by a liberal and democratic education, open to all citizens alike;

The International Council of Women and the Conference of Women Suffragists of the Allied Countries and the United States petition as follows:—

(1.) That an international commission or a permanent international bureau of education should be provided for and included in the Peace Treaty.

(2.) That women whose rôle is every day more active in the educational sphere should be called to sit on this commission or bureau on the same terms as men.

Finally, Mme. Dr. Gerard Mangin (France) explained the resolution:—

"That a bureau of hygiene should be created on the same footing as that of labour."

Mme. Siegfried, president of the French National Council of Women, spoke last and thanked President Wilson and the members of the League of Nations Commission for having suspended their work in order to receive us, and told them of women's wish to work with them for peace.

After President Wilson had congratulated us on the precision and brevity with which we had explained our views, which he said could not be included in the League covenant, as it cannot include questions of detail, after he had informed us that in the country where the people had been called upon to pronounce on its choice of nationality, women had taken part with men in the vote, and after he had wished success to our movement, we retired, satisfied with our reception and the encouragement expressed, and confident in the future.

SUZANNE GRINBERG,

Advocate at the Paris Court,
Secretary of the Inter-Allied Conference.

SPEECHES

of the Members of the Women's Delegation to the League of Nations Commission.

LADY ABERDEEN, President of the International Council of Women:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—In the name of this delegation, which represents the International Council of Women and the Suffrage Conference of the Allied countries and the United States, I beg you to accept our thanks for the honour that you do us by receiving us; in doing so you recognise the claims of women who wish to be heard at the moment when you are making grave decisions to assure as far as possible the future peace and security of the world.

I have no need to assure you, Mr. President, of our profound sympathy and our good wishes for your efforts and those of your colleagues to establish a League of Nations on a lasting basis.

The International Council of Women has been ahead of you: created to carry out for women this unity of thought and action which aims at the well-being of humanity, it represents 22 federated national councils, which in their turn are federations of women's societies, working in each country for progress, and including about 20 million women. Can we not then be considered pioneers of the League of Nations?

Have we not the right to think that we are suited to give you our help in ripening public opinion, in spreading the principles on which you formed the League of Nations, and in convincing women all over the world that it is the only means of avoiding for them and their families in the future the horrors they have suffered in the last few years.

But to gain the full and complete co-operation of women there are certain points that we respectfully submit to your attention; we hope that you will adopt the solutions that we propose in the resolutions we present to you now, and which some of our delegates will now support briefly.

MRS. CORBETT-ASHBY:

We beg to thank you for having granted our request to be admitted to take our place with you in the League of Nations. We still have two requests to make:

When you return to your country, do all that you can that this may be realised not only in theory but in practice, and insist that your Government nominates women as members of the council, of the commissions, and of the bureau, as this right has been granted them. See, too, that women are chosen from among those whose names are recommended by women's societies in a democratic and representative way; for it may happen that a woman nominated by a Government may represent more the opinion of the Government than that of the women of a country!

ORIENTAL WOMEN AND FREEDOM.

MME. SUZANNE GRINBERG:

Since a new world is to arise from the war it should be a better world. But an improvement in human life cannot be realised if women remain in future in the conditions which centuries of error and tradition have made for them. I am not here to plead our cause—the cause of Western women. Our civilisation is happily sufficiently advanced, although we are treated as inferiors from the civil and political point of view, for us to have both according to law and custom the free right to the disposal of our persons.

It is not so everywhere in the world. There are countries in which written laws claim that the wife and child of a man who is unable to pay a debt may be taken as pledges by the creditor.

There are countries where paternal authority is so great that mothers can sell or hire their daughters—children of 12 or 13 years,—or bind them by legal contracts for sums varying from 500 to 1000 francs, to make slaves of them or inmates of bad houses. There are laws to which millions are subject, and which are all the more rigorous for having a religious character, which prescribe that the father, master of his daughter, can marry her without her consent. In a great Asiatic country where marriage is obligatory and where the law gives a regular character to polygamy, the future wife is *never* consulted as to the choice of a husband.

There are countries where the law of man, the stronger, is exercised in all its horror, where the husband has the right to inflict on his wife the severest corporal punishment; where he has the right to repudiate her, consequently to separate her for ever from her children for futile motives—where the law gives the man always the guardianship of the children in case of divorce, even when he is the guilty party!

Gentlemen, are you not indignant at such facts, of which I can only give you, alas! a faint idea, for lack of time?

After having established the first principle of human justice, that the peoples have a right to free self-determination, do you not feel the higher duty affirming that every human being, man and woman, has the right to choose freely his own destiny!

It is true that we have received no mandate to plead this cause by those whom it concerns. There is something more imperious that imposes on us the obligation to speak of these miseries and horrors: it is the duty of every human being who knows these injustices and iniquities, to denounce them, in order to have them righted. In the interests of humanity, therefore, we remind you of these barbarous laws.

We think it would be a great claim to honour for the League of Nations only to admit nations who undertake to give the women of their country new and better conditions. We think, too, that it would dishonour this great League if it did not proclaim before all the right of human beings to live in their country free and respected.

STATE REGULATION OF VICE.

MME. AVRIL DE STE. CROIX:

My task, gentlemen, is to present the case not of women living under an inferior civilisation, and of primitive mentality. They belong, on the contrary, to nations which have attained a high degree of civilisation, nations on whom they are an indelible blot by reason of the position in which they are placed.

By a mistaken conception of the rôle of the State in the dominion of public order, of morals and hygiene, these nations have, through the State regulation of prostitution, put outside the law the unfortunates whom misery had already put outside society.

As President of the International Commission for the Repression of the Traffic in Women, which the International Council of Women has entrusted to me for the last 20 years,

I have the sad task of explaining to you to-day this agonising problem, whose gravity and complexity we realise. Like you, we are interested in hygiene; like you, we are anxious for public order and morality; and it is just because we are interested in these questions to a high degree that we wish for the disappearance of an institution from all countries where it still exists, which, by giving men a fictitious security in vice, is most degrading to women's dignity.

Gentlemen, order is not promoted by disorder, nor morality by immorality, nor public health by practices which are a defiance of hygiene. Society is degraded by people whose degradation it permits; nay, more, whose degradation it sanctions.

In the hour when the future is being prepared, when, after the years of suffering we have gone through, the world is being rebuilt, we must find something else, to save humanity from disease, disorder and immorality, than the official slavery of prostitution for the most unfortunate of women. The prison of the tolerated house must disappear, and its procuress, the shameful traffic in women.

We suffer in having to raise the veil that hides this terrible social sore. But we should have failed in our duty if we had not demanded the inclusion in the principles of the League of Nations of absolute respect for the dignity of womanhood, and consequently the disappearance of institutions or laws which are the last link in the chain which binds women to ancient slavery.

We know that it is not in your power to intervene directly in these questions, which are questions of internal order. We do not ask you to do so. But we expect, from your high sentiment of justice and human dignity, your moral support for the triumph of the principles we represent here.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

MME. DE WITT SCHLUMBERGER:

Woman suffrage has lately made magnificent progress in Central Europe, Germany, Austria, Hungary, but we feel sad that it has needed revolution everywhere to grant women such just and natural rights. In England and America alone have women recently been granted the suffrage by constitutional methods. Otherwise, only violence and force have won, which is deplorable. Woman suffrage should be granted by stable and wise governments in a spirit of justice. It should be given, and not snatched by violence.

Therefore, we urge strongly that the principle of woman suffrage be proclaimed by the League of Nations in a spirit of peace and justice, without waiting for the necessity of revolutions.

MISS FRY:

The fact that our colleagues of the Allied countries have asked a British delegate to support the suffrage claim is a double honour for us, as our Government led the way in granting this right to women. Under the ministry of Mr. Lloyd George our long struggle for woman suffrage, a struggle often bitter, has led to the most satisfactory armistice.

We had our bad times like other reformers, and it might have been asked whether our claims were justified, or were simply the expression of platform excitement; but facts have completely reassured us. Woman suffrage has proved to have even greater significance than we had hoped. It is not only in the other half of our fellow countrymen that we have noticed a complete and joyful change of attitude; in ourselves, too, a deep feeling of responsibility has arisen for everything concerning the honour, security, and welfare of our country.

This individual feeling of responsibility is the very essence of democracy, both from the national and from the international point of view, in peace and in war. For these questions do not only concern men. Think, gentlemen, of all that women have suffered in this war, think of the bombardments, the wrecks, the sickness, the hunger, the horrors of invasion! I have lived for more than two years in the villages of devastated France, and I wish I could bring before you the piteous anthology of sufferings always renewed that one cannot contemplate without tears. Think of all the women worn out with the work of the absent men; think of all those who mourn a husband, a son, a brother; think also of starving Europe, of all the children who are dying now, owing to the war; picture all this misery and you will understand that the women of all nations claim the right to speak in the name of their country. We know that even if you wish, you cannot dictate laws to each country, but we hope that before you

separate, you will give the weight of your sanction to the principle of equal suffrage.

We go further: Everywhere where the peoples are called by the League of Nations to dispose freely of themselves by referendum, we respectfully claim for women the right to take part in this plebiscite. The first elements of patriotism and liberty will be taught by the women to the children of all nations; enable them, gentlemen, to speak as citizens sharing these benefits, and not as helots to whom they are refused.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION.

MME. SCHIAVONI:

The League of Nations responds to our most earnest wishes because we think that it will not only be an organ of peace, but also an organ of civilisation and the basis of a renewed society. It seems to us that it would be necessary not only to establish new laws, but also to introduce a new spirit into education—into the teaching of the younger generation. That could only be done by a permanent international organ, which will establish between different nations an exchange of their general culture, of their history, and of their moral and social development; and which will develop in each individual conscience the sense of human solidarity, and of the respect due to the liberties and rights of each nation.

MRS. FANNY FERN ANDREWS:

We think it is chiefly by education that the necessity of the League of Nations could be demonstrated to humanity. We think, consequently, that the various countries should come to an understanding to adopt an education which would rest on the same principles as the League of Nations. Everywhere educators recognise that the League of Nations will transform education; it will be internationalised as commerce and industry are internationalised.

The international institution that we ask for is no new idea. Before the war the International Federation of Teachers proposed the creation of an international bureau of education. Lately, the idea has been supported by the conference of Allied Associations for the League of Nations meeting at Paris under the presidency of M. Léon Bourgeois, and by the Workers' Educational Association of England, and National Education Association of the United States.

In 1913, at the invitation of the Dutch Government, and at the instigation of the United States Government, seventeen states had nominated official delegates to an International Education Conference, which was to meet at the Hague in 1914.

Suffrage Discussion in Parliament.

In consequence of representations to the Women's Rights group in the Chamber of Deputies by a feminist delegation belonging to the principal suffrage groups, the Chamber has undertaken to discuss the bill for women's municipal vote as soon as the debate on electoral reform now going on is finished. At the request of the delegation, M. Siegfried, President of the group, approached Senator Bérard, a notorious anti-feminist, who is charged with the report on M. Louis Martin's bill, which gives to women the same political rights as men, in order to ask him not to raise the question of woman suffrage in the Senate before the Chamber had pronounced on the question. It is therefore possible that our next communiqué may announce a victory, half a victory, or a defeat.

Labour Resolutions.

Resolutions presented on March 18th by Mme. Duchêne, delegate of the French Office for Women's Interests to the International Labour Commission of the Peace Conference:

Considering that special Labour legislation affecting women serves generally only to limit their freedom of working and to keep them out of certain industries whilst leaving them free to enter others which are harmful to their health; and

Considering that an insufficient, or at least different, technical preparation for their work puts them at a disadvantage on the labour market; and

Considering that human society has, in regard to all children, imperative duties necessitating their protection from the moment of conception; and

Lastly, considering that maternity is a function of fundamental interest to the State;

We present this petition:

(1.) That all protective labour legislation shall be established on a basis of absolute equality for all adult workers without any distinction of sex.

(2.) That no prohibition applying to the whole of industry should be allowed, but that all restrictive measures should only deal with one specified operation.

(3.) That these prohibitions should be strictly limited after consultation with commissions of women, composed of delegates of the women's trade unions concerned, women factory inspectors, specialists in physiology and hygiene, medical women, or others having some special qualification to deal with the question.

(4.) That these commissions before giving their decision should try to find out whether the unsuitability for women does not really depend on unhealthy operations or conditions which should be modified in the interests equally of men as of women workers.

(5.) That technical education should be accessible to all, and organised on a basis of equality between the sexes.

(6.) That the protection of motherhood should be instituted on the same grounds as the protection of childhood.

(7.) That it should be recognised that the State should, without any distinction whatever, allot to each expectant or nursing mother a payment sufficient for maintenance in compensation for the wages lost during the period she is forbidden to work.

Deputation to the Chamber.

A delegation of the League against the restriction of women's political rights, composed of representatives of numerous women's societies, was received at the Chamber of Deputies by M. Varenne, President of the Commission on Universal Suffrage. The following societies were represented: L'Action des Femmes, le Comité d'Action Suffragiste, l'Union de Pensée Féminine, l'Amélioration du Sort de la Femme, l'Office Français des Intérêts Féminins, la Fédération Féministe Universitaire, as well as various trades unions. This delegation was charged to present the energetic protest of women, who will not be content with municipal suffrage. "The delegates, considering that women's collaboration is indispensable to carry out the enormous work of reconstruction that the war has imposed on France, wish to participate in the life of the nation to the same extent as men, and declare that every restriction of their rights, in the grave times that we are passing through, would constitute not only an injustice but a dangerous lack of comprehension of present needs."

FINLAND.

National Council of Women of Finland.

We, the Women of Finland, on approaching our sisters in other countries again, after an interval of many years, now have some information to give you that fills our hearts with boundless joy. Finland is a free country, a free state among free states. Our independence has been acknowledged by most of the foreign Powers.

Formerly very little was known abroad about the political position of our country, hardly more than that for centuries Finland was a part of Sweden, and later, in 1809, united with Russia. For the last twenty years our people have experienced political oppression to such a degree that all its mental energy had to be directed towards the defence of our rights.

Of course, our people longed for political freedom, its sons and daughters always being in hopes of having the right of developing their own nationality and of settling, at last, their conditions of existence according to the necessities of the people. The events in the world hastened these struggles for independence, and on the 4th of November, 1917, Finland declared herself free from Russia.

But political independence is not won without sacrifices. Even our people have had to buy its autonomy through the shedding of the heartblood of its sons.

In the early spring of 1918, Bolshevism, this pestilence of the East, had spread, through the influence of the Russian troops stationed in Finland, among various de-humanised classes of our people. These have joined the Bolshevik hordes of the East, our young freedom seemed in danger. But the same members of our people, with the young at their head, then rose unanimously, with great enthusiasm, for the courageous defence of our homes, our national culture and our lawful social order, for all that is precious in life.

Having, besides, received assistance from abroad, the enemy was at last driven out of the country, and the revolution was put down. After a time of sorrow and suffering, a new era thus dawned for our country, a time during which, in spite

of still threatening dangers, we seek to regulate our home affairs and make clear our position with regard to other powers. We are aware of the fact that freedom is binding, that our people in future will be answerable as a free people, and we women, who since 1907 have taken part, as authorised citizens, in the work of the delegates of the people, which, we are sorry to say, was often rendered difficult by outside oppression, we deeply feel that our native land now claims more from us than ever before.

Would to God that the day may soon dawn when the nations of the world will return to peace and order, when the co-work of our World's Union can be taken up again in the sublime spirit of our motto. Women in Finland longingly look forward to such a time.

With sisterly greetings, on behalf of The National Council of Women of Finland.

TILMA HAINARI, President.
BERTA SOUTANDER, Secretary.

GERMANY.

A DANGER FOR UNIVERSITY WOMEN.

In the *Frauenfrage* for April, Paula Schlodtmann points out that in spite of women's enfranchisement their rights are not respected. The universities are now unable to accommodate the crowd of young men and women who wish either to begin their studies, which were delayed, or continue those which were interrupted by the war.

The Social Democratic Ministry in Saxony have met this difficulty by refusing to admit any women to schools until all male candidates have found room. The writer complains bitterly that in this and in other fields (e.g., commercial employees), women who were good enough to do men's work as well as their own in the war are ruthlessly pushed aside.

Heidelberg University refuses to admit new women students for the next two sessions, and Leipzig threatens to do the same, and all this not in favour of returning soldiers, but of any sort of male!

LUXEMBURG.

WOMEN VOTE IN REFERENDUM.

Women voted for the first time in Luxemburg in the plebiscite to decide the future form of government and economic alliance.

GREAT BRITAIN.

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship

During the last two months local elections of various kinds have been taking place throughout Great Britain. Women have for long been eligible to sit on local government bodies, but partly as a result of prejudice—always much slower to disappear than legal inhibition,—and partly, one must admit, as a result of apathy among qualified women, there have been comparatively few women local councillors. The result of the recent elections as far as they are known is encouraging.

The most important of our elections are the county council elections, since the county council has very full administrative powers; and among county councils the London County Council ranks first, the "L.C.C." elections being in many respects as politically important as Parliamentary elections. It is therefore very satisfactory to learn that eleven or twelve of the new county councils have women on them, in some cases two, three, or even four, and that the London County Council heads the list with eight. In all 46 women county councillors have been elected, whereas previously there were only 12.

Urban district councils and parish councils have also a good record, and there is one particularly cheering election story of a tiny electorate of twenty-one voters, where sixteen voters registered their votes and returned a woman by fifteen votes to the rural district council.

WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION BILL.

Quite suddenly there has loomed large on the political horizon a Bill of the first importance to women. This is the Women's Emancipation Bill introduced by the Labour Party, and consisting of three short clauses—one opening all public posts to women, one extending the franchise to women on the same terms as it is now given to men, and one making women eligible to sit in the House of Lords. In March this Bill was scarcely realised; on April 4th it passed its second reading without a division in the House of Commons, and the Govern-

ment gave it its support on the understanding that it would try at a later stage to amend the clause extending the woman's franchise. The Bill, in fact, was in the position—unusual for a feminist measure!—of having no real opposition, and indeed this was almost inevitable, since the Coalition Party in its election address pledged itself to provide equal opportunities for women, since the Liberal Party has passed a resolution to the same effect, and since the Labour Party is sponsor to the Bill. But although the Bill is unopposed, it may yet lack the force behind it required to carry it through all its Parliamentary stages, for the time of Parliament is necessarily limited, and must be given to the most important measures. The duty therefore falls on British citizens, and particularly on British women citizens, of showing that they attach importance to this Bill and wish it proceeded with. The N.U.S.E.C. is organising and concentrating support for the Bill.

STATE PENSIONS FOR WIDOWS.

In last month's issue of the *Women's International News* we reported the change in constitution of the N.U.S.E.C., whereby it will concentrate its efforts for six reforms only during the year, unless an emergency arises when it is necessary for the Union to take immediate action. The three reforms of the six for which we are at present working are the opening of the legal and judicial professions to women, the reform of the Guardianship of Infant Laws, and the granting of State pensions to civilian widows with dependant children. Of these the third is perhaps at the moment receiving our particular attention, and is that towards which our attitude requires explanation. The aims of the Union in this matter are best explained by a widows pension scheme which it is advocating, of which the following is a brief outline:—

Pensions should be paid to widows with one or more legitimate children of school age and under: the pension should be at the same rate as war pensions, rising from 20s. 5d. for a widow with one child to 42s. 1d. where there are six children. An alternative scheme is also given. There should be an income limit above which no pension or a reduced pension would be paid. The administering authority should be the Ministry of Health acting through local committees.

No special supervision is to be instituted, but if a woman is proved guilty of serious neglect the pension will be forfeited and the children removed to institutions.

MARRIED WOMEN'S INCOME TAX.

A subject is now receiving official attention which has for long received the attention of at least the married section of British womanhood. This is the vexed question of the married women's income tax. At present, when a British woman marries, her income is for purposes of income tax reckoned as a part of her husband's, and the whole is taxed as one income. The result is often a serious loss to both husband and wife, and the system acts a deterrent to marriage. A woman before marriage may have had an income of £110, which, being below the taxable minimum, remained tax-free: her fiancé, let us imagine, was in the same position. When they marry, their joint income becomes £220 and is taxed on the amount by which it exceeds the minimum of £120. This practice has long been felt a great hardship, and particularly intolerable, as it completely disregards the Married Women's Property Act, which recognises a married woman's property as distinct from her husband's. A Royal Commission is just now being established to revise the present system of income tax, and there has been a great agitation in Parliament and in the country on the subject of the married woman's income tax. The result is that the Commission will consider the subject and hear evidence from women's organisations.

(Signed) IREZ M. FERGUSON, Secretary,
National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Women's Freedom League.

At the beginning of April the Women's Freedom League held its Twelfth Annual Conference in London, which was attended by delegates from the League's branches in England, Scotland and Wales. Urgency resolutions were passed calling upon the Government (1) to give facilities for the Barristers and Solicitors (Qualification of Women) Bill through the House of Commons so that it shall become law at an early date and open up both branches of the legal profession to women; (2) to remove the present anomaly in Income Tax Law by which the incomes of married people are taxed jointly, resulting in what is practically a penalty on marriage, and to increase the number of women on the Income Tax Commission, inviting

women's organisations to appoint representatives to this Commission, and (3) to remove the blockade on Russia and Central Europe. These resolutions were subsequently sent to the Prime Minister and the different Government departments whose business it will be to deal with them.

The Conference strongly protested against any efforts, national or international, to limit the opportunities of women in the fields of labour under the name of protection.

The policy of the Women's Freedom League for the coming year will be based on the resolutions passed at the Conference generally pledging the League to work for equal voting rights for men and women; equal opportunities, awards and responsibilities of women with men throughout all branches of our national life; and for securing the return at the next General Election of women candidates whose ideals and principles are in accordance with the policy of the League.

Dr. Elizabeth Knight was elected Hon. Treasurer and the following members to the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League:—Miss A. M. Clark, Mrs. Schofield Coates, Miss D. Evans, Miss J. Gibson, Councillor Margaret Hodge, Mrs. Metge, Miss Anna Munro, Mrs. Mustard, Miss M. I. Neal, Miss Helena Normanton, B.A., Mrs. Picotti and Mrs. Whetton. Miss F. A. Underwood was appointed General Secretary at the first meeting of this Committee.

F. A. UNDERWOOD.

The League of the Church Militant.

WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD.

At a meeting of the General Council of the League of the Church Militant, better known by its former title of the Church League for Women's Suffrage, it was decided by a majority vote "to challenge definitely (whilst not restricting the general programme of the League) what has hitherto been the custom of the Church of confining the priesthood to men." The resignation by the Bishop of Lincoln of the office of president of the League, on the ground that the existing programme of the League covered too wide a field, was announced at the opening of the Council. The office of the League is at 6, York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C. 2, and the secretary will be glad to hear from members of the Church of England, or of Churches in full communion therewith, who desire to support the League in the attitude it has adopted.

Irish Women Citizens' and Local Government Associations.

The above is the new title of the oldest Irish Suffrage Society, the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association. This Society was formed in 1876, with Mrs. Haslam as hon. secretary. Its long record includes work for the Women Poor Law Guardians Bill, the Women's Municipal Franchise Bill, the Local Authorities Bill, enabling women to sit on Borough and County Councils, and many other measures affecting the welfare of women and children. Mrs. Haslam, the founder, has worked for Irish Suffrage ever since she signed the great petition of 1866, being one of the twenty-five Irish-women who did so. With her husband she fought for the repeal of the C.D. Acts, and for every social reform of the last half-century. She completes her ninetieth year in April next. There have been many presentations and public acknowledgments of the gratitude felt by Irish feminists towards Mrs. Haslam and her husband, and on 14th December, the first occasion when women were allowed to take part in a Parliamentary election, there was an impromptu demonstration outside one of the polling booths, when representatives of Irish Suffrage Societies gathered to receive Mrs. Haslam, who made a tour of the polling places in the city in a motor with a flag of her society. This was carried by herself and Mr. Haslam in the great Suffrage procession of 1911.

The Society was reorganised in November, 1918, and will henceforward be known by its new title. It will work to secure fair representation for women on all public boards, councils, on the bench, and in Parliament. It will immediately concentrate on the question of registration, which will require special attention in Ireland, as the first register under the Representation of the People Act is very incomplete. Mrs. Haslam has herself spent much time in the revision courts, and is convinced that the only satisfactory method would be to sweep away the anomalies of the present measure, especially the clause disfranchising the tenant of rooms taken furnished. Certainly few people of Mrs. Haslam's years could show such a record of work accomplished, or have as clear and capable an interest

in present problems. Her life is proof that constructive work can be done in Ireland without identification with either sectarianism or party spirit, but with the sole object of serving the State.

CANADA.

Quebec held a referendum on the sale of beer, cider, and wines on April 10, in which women were not allowed to vote.

Whatever views may be held for or against the prohibition of alcohol, it is certain that women have as good a right to be consulted as have men. Here is a purely domestic question, involving no political training or experience, and no decent reason can possibly be adduced for gagging half the population and leaving the decision to the other half.

Many women's organisations throughout the Dominion forwarded to Sir Robert Borden resolutions in favour of having women representatives at the Peace Conference, and are disappointed that no sign has come from overseas of the co-operation of women in one of the most momentous conferences of the world's history.

Though women in Canada are enfranchised, they have not achieved full political or social freedom. They are not yet eligible to sit in the Dominion Parliament, nor in some of the Provincial Legislatures, nor to hold municipal offices, nor to sit on juries, and many magistrates' benches are forbidden them. —*Woman's Century.*

INDIA.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union of India, at its meeting at Allahabad, in February, passed a resolution in favour of making prostitution illegal. They addressed an open letter to the clergy and another to the women of the world, urging that it is the money temptation which is responsible for the fall of the greater number of women who take to an evil life, and that the penalisation of the buying and selling transaction would lead to a great decrease of vice and disease.

SOUTH AFRICA.

No report has been received from the W.E.A.U. on the success of woman suffrage in the Union Parliament, but South African newspapers have arrived giving an account of the debate, and of the previous Parliamentary history of woman suffrage.

In 1912 Mr. Andrew's bill was defeated by 70 votes to 30. In 1914 Mr. Wyndham's bill was not brought to a vote. In 1917 Mr. Rokeby's motion was defeated by 63 to 28. In 1918, on the Electoral Bill, a woman suffrage motion was rejected by 54 to 39. Now Mr. Wyndham's motion has been carried by 44 votes to 42.

The debate followed the well-worn lines; Mr. Raubenheimer urged St. Paul's view, Mr. Merriman wanted women to limit their activities to the home, and cited as a warning example the sad case of Finland, where 19 women actually sit in Parliament!

The debate, as elsewhere, cut across party divisions; the motion was proposed by a Unionist and seconded by a Nationalist, Mr. Le Roux van Nickerk. The acting-Prime Minister supported it, and the Ministry of Agriculture voted against it. The motion was adopted, but cannot be carried into effect without legislation, which will not be introduced this session.

ITALY.

NEW WOMEN'S PAPER.

A sign of the awakening of the Italian suffragist and feminist movement is given by the rise of new women's papers.

Until last year we had only two weekly papers, one Socialist, "La Difesa delle Lavoratrici"; and one Catholic, "La Donna e il Lavoro," both more party organs than suffrage papers. There were also the bulletins of associations (e.g., "La Attività Femminile," of the National Council of Women, which had no suffrage section 'until last year), some monthly reviews like "La Nostra Rivista," by Bisi Albini, and "La Vita Fraterna."

We can now announce the publication of three weekly papers, one of which will be issued at Milan under the direction of a well-known suffragist, Dr. Tarugi; another is already published in Rome with the title "L'Ida Femminile"; a third at Milan with the title "La Posta Femminile della Domenica." These two last are not published, like the first, by the work and

at the expense of a group of women, but of editors who are risking money in them, and thereby showing their faith in the awakening of women's ideas. Besides the weekly papers there is quite an array of women's reviews and bulletins. A beautifully illustrated publication is the new paper, "Fiaccola," of Milan; new is also "L'Illustrazione Femminile" of Quin-teri, an editor (woman) who promises a series of women's publications, not all of them suffrage.

MARGHERITA ANCONA.

THE ITALIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

The Council did not wish until last year to take up the question of woman suffrage, nor to form a suffrage section, according to the statutes of the International Council of Women. It has been converted at last and has formed a section called "Social and Political Life," which will be chiefly concerned with the vote, and of which Prof. Franciosi is president. A sign of the conversion of the National Council is that at the next Congress, which will take place in Rome in May, a session is devoted to the suffrage question. M. A.

The National Federation for Woman Suffrage holds its 4th Congress at Milan on April 27 and 28. The political capacity of women and electoral reform, the judicial capacity of women, social hygiene, the action of suffragists at the next elections, the preparation of women to exercise the vote, are some of the aspects of suffrage to be discussed.

NETHERLANDS.

The *Maandblad* of the Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht writes: "Now that the proposals for taxation have been disposed of by the Chamber, the Speaker proposed to begin the debate on the Indian Budget on April 3. Mr. Ketelaar urged that precedence be given to the Marchand Bill (for W.S.). The Chamber, however, considered that, to assure a regular functioning of the State-machine, the Indian Budget should not be delayed. A proposal of Wijnkoop (Communist) to give precedence to the W.S. Bill, because no other cause for delay exists, except the unwillingness to pass the bill, was turned down by 72 votes to 7. The argument of Schaper (Social-Democrat) that no woman would receive the vote a day sooner whether the bill is discussed before or after the Indian Budget, which argument was supported by Nolens (Catholic), was the reason which decided the Chamber to give precedence to the Indian Budget! Is woman suffrage going to come immediately after the Indian Budget? We are beginning to doubt it. Must the patience of women be tried still further? Or is a revolution really necessary to remind those gentlemen of their promise?"

AFTER SUFFRAGISM, FEMINISM.

In an article in the *Maandblad*, Dr. Aletta Jacobs discusses the proposed reform of the Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht, which will become necessary as soon as the Union's present aim is fulfilled by the grant of woman suffrage. The statutes and regulations will have to be revised, and the Union's name and purpose must be different. If the reorganised Union wishes to perform its task adequately, a great field of activity lies before it. The main point, which is the sanction of the Constitution for the W.S. Bill, once it is introduced by ordinary law, will probably not require a big struggle. But other points will give more work. A careful study of the existing laws must be made in order to discover every case in which the interests of women are insufficiently provided for. Wherever the social position of woman is inferior to that of man, equality must be urged. All bills concerning big social and legal questions must be scrutinised from woman's point of view.

The conception of the Vereeniging's neutrality must also be revised. Political and religious neutrality must remain. But on social and legal questions there may be more than one point of view, in which case that of the majority must prevail. Every problem of general interest can be debated in the Vereeniging and discussed in its organ, because everything that has a general interest obviously also concerns women.

Miss Martina Kramers, in the same paper, expresses the view that men should not be members of the reorganised Union, because in the new movement, which is to aim at the expression of the convictions of that half of humanity which has been oppressed up to the present, the word must be to the women.

The April number of the *Maandblad*, with an article on local government, one on educational reform, and one on tribunals for children, is already a specimen of the direction in which the preoccupation of the enfranchised womanhood of Holland will move.

mentions the different bills presented to Parliament, and how the question every time failed on account of the resistance of the Conservatives in the First Chamber.

The bill refers, furthermore, to different circumstances in other countries of Europe; for instance, that a belligerent Power like England, a neutral one like Holland, living under such hard conditions, have enfranchised their women, and that the countries of Central Europe in a Radical system of government have seen the best possibilities for the future of these countries. All this and other circumstances have contributed to the Reform Bill concerning municipal franchise, presented to the extraordinary session of the Riksdag last November. In this bill was included that women should be eligible to the Landsting. The bill contains the request to grant women the vote and eligibility to both Chambers on the same conditions as for men. In order to facilitate for married women the use of their rights, a special bill will be introduced in order to allow husband and wife to vote for each other. It is, moreover, said in the bill that argument in favour of this reform is so easily to be found in the development of modern society that it seems unnecessary to repeat it here. The bill refers also to the argument in favour of this reform, presented in the bill laid before Parliament in 1912 and 1918. It may be added that the movement towards granting full citizenship to women has grown in power and success. It is considered as quite improbable that, owing to the desire for general understanding that has been shown in the Riksdag, women should not be granted the same rights as men in public life.

Finally it is stated that the cause of women's suffrage, having been unanimously embraced by the extraordinary meeting of the Riksdag in November, when it treated the revision of the municipal laws, it may be considered as a matter of mutual understanding to grant women full political citizenship during this session.

The annual report of the National Association for Women Suffrage has appeared at the same time, and in spite of the most unfavourable circumstances in several respects the work has been going on steadily. The courses of lectures paid for by the late Mrs. Bergman-Osterberg have had 23,590 hearers. Lecturing tours have, moreover, been arranged in the counties of Jönköping, Kalmar, Östergötland, and Kristianstad. The number of local branches was 236 at the end of 1919, with 16,106 members.

Stockholm, April, 1919. NINI KOHNBERGER.

Socialist Women's Appeal to the Government.

Besides the introduction of effective protection against child labour, and special regulations for young people, so that the latter have opportunity for education which the community offers them for the development of their faculties and training in citizenship, as well as the introduction of an eight hour day and annual holiday as further necessary factors in raising the working class, we should like to emphasise the following:—

In the first place it is necessary that legislation should be passed on home work and the sweating system abolished and work carried on on healthy labour principles.

We also wish for regulations to protect child birth.

According to the new children's laws the man is responsible for the mother's maintenance grant, which is uncertain and must be made more effective through the action of the community; this can be done if the law provides for payment in advance.

Besides that effective maternity insurance must be introduced.

As the struggle for bread is as hard for women as for men, we are convinced that there is no moral justification for special laws restricting women's entry to occupations, but the hours of work must be the same for men as for women.

Short and fixed hours of work are necessary for men and women.

Special legislative restrictions of night work is all the less needed, as night work for men is gradually disappearing, and where it is necessary as in printing offices, overwork is more and more avoided by legislation on shift work, but we should specially like to emphasise the necessity of introducing shift into all occupations where night work is usual.

To us, the introduction of widow's pensions seems the best way of guaranteeing to women, who are the sole support of children, the possibility of devoting themselves to the care of their children, and that unmarried mothers, and divorced or deserted wives should be guaranteed assistance from the community for the support of the children.

We further emphasise the demand for equal pay for equal work for men and women, which principle must also be applied if in certain cases higher wages are introduced for citizens who have children to provide for. Stockholm, March, 1919.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

League of Women Voters.

As forward-looking for to-day as the organisation of a national suffrage association was for fifty years ago is the League of Women Voters formed at the jubilee convention of the National American Women Suffrage Association, March 24th to 29th, in Saint Louis, Missouri. The suggestion for the League and the constructive programme for its development are the expression of Mrs. Chapman Catt's democratic vision and ideals of service. The plan suggested by her was enthusiastically adopted by the convention.

The object of the League is not to keep women from membership in the political parties. It is not a third party, nor a whip over the present parties. It is not to secure the election of particular candidates nor the adoption of partisan legislation. It is to further civic, educational, industrial and moral legislation for all the people. It is a patriotic undertaking for national welfare.

The platform for Americanisation presented by Mrs. Catt, and adopted is:—

(1.) Compulsory education for all children between the ages of five and fourteen, with school attendance provided for nine months of each year.

(2.) Education of illiterate adults in common school subjects and English by extension courses of the public schools.

(3.) Stricter provisions for naturalisation, the character of which must be determined by co-operation with other organisations.

(4.) Votes for women to be given only to those who are naturalised in their own person or through naturalisation of their father or mother; or husband after a residence of five years.

(5.) Federal naturalisation laws to be so amended as to make it possible for a married woman to be naturalised on her own qualifications.

(6.) English to be the language of all public and private schools teaching general subjects.

(7.) Compulsory publication of lessons in citizenship in foreign-language papers.

(8.) An oath of allegiance to the United States as qualification of the vote for all citizens, native and foreign born.

(9.) Schools of citizenship to be established in every rural school district and city ward in conjunction with the public school.

(10.) An education qualification for every voter in the United States after a definite date to be determined.

Committees are to be formed on industry, child-welfare, citizenship, elections, social morality, unification of laws, food, supply and demand, and research. These committees are to become familiar with all laws on the subjects under consideration, to recommend legislative programmes, to prepare and issue literature on their subjects, and to work in the states through the state committees.

The League is a component part of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Its membership is made up of enfranchised women in the fifteen full suffrage states and the eleven presidential suffrage states. Each of the state suffrage organisations in the full suffrage states is to adopt the name of the state prefixed to the title—League of Women Voters. These state leagues will consist of individual members and organised committees with the addition of organisations already established which subscribe to the principles of the League. This plan will be followed by each succeeding state as it becomes enfranchised.

The League will have its annual meeting at the same time as the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the delegates sitting as members of two houses. The enfranchised women will sit with all the delegates when questions of national policy are to be discussed, and will sit separately when matters pertaining particularly to voters are under consideration.

Mrs. Catt remains at the head of the National Association, and Mrs. Charles H. Brooks, of Kansas, is the chairman of the League of Women Voters. A budget of \$100,000 was pledged at the convention for the year's work of the National

Association, and announcement was made that a group of New York women had underwritten the budget of \$20,000 needed for the League. In addition to its chairman the League will have a council, consisting of one woman from each state represented in the League.

A primary object of the League is the passage of the federal suffrage amendment, and the intent is that when that is accomplished the National American Woman Suffrage Association will lay aside its name, and as the League of Women Voters the women of the United States will work for the country and the world.

There was great rejoicing at the convention over the gains of suffrage territory in the fifty years since Wyoming women were given the vote. During the week of the convention three more states were added to the victories of the last twelve months, the greatest number in any year since the association was organised. The three new states are Maine, Minnesota, and Missouri, and the action of the state legislatures in granting presidential suffrage to the women of these states increases the number of states in which women may vote for President of the United States to eleven. The fifteen full suffrage states added make twenty-six, more than half of the states in the union. The state suffrage officers of Missouri sacrificed attendance at the convention to lobby with the state legislature. In order to secure a vote a special train was engaged to take an absent legislator back to his seat. The news of the passage of the bill in Missouri was telephoned to the convention and occasioned a great celebration in which Missouri women and the women of the other states joined.

The success of the federal suffrage amendment in the next session of Congress was predicted at the convention. It is probable that there will be an extraordinary session in May, and promises for early passage of the amendment have been made by men of both parties. The Congressional Committee of the National Association has been much concerned in the organisation of friendly committees in both Senate and House. The former will not be completed, it is thought, until just before the session, but the House committees have been chosen and are considered favourable for the amendment.

The Americanisation address in which Mrs. Catt outlined the platform which she proposed for the League was a promising opening for the convention. A brilliant dinner the following evening was attended by 1,200 guests. An Inquiry Dinner it was called, and the speakers humorously sought the reason for delay in the passage of the federal amendment. The report of the Overseas Hospitals supported in France, and the other war activities of the National Association, pointed clearly to the injustice of denying military rank to women, doctors, and nurses in the American Army, and resolutions were adopted calling for this to be righted. One afternoon was devoted to reminiscences, and tributes to pioneer suffragists. There were conferences when experts discussed the problems for which the committees of the League of Women Voters will now seek remedial measures. One evening programme was called Unpublished Records, the speakers giving intimate experiences of this year's winning campaigns.

On the last evening there was a wonderful vision of the future interpreted by Mrs. Catt, Miss Helen Fraser of England, and Governor Allen of Kansas. Miss Fraser said in part, "The future has its roots in the past. Its form depends on action in the present, and this time is of the greatest importance to all society, to all civilisation, men and women alike. We British women are enfranchised, and know you soon will be. We count that our greatest practical gain, and we look at the great problems of reconstruction conscious that we must play a great part in them. We want our Ministry of Health not only to be established, but to have an advisory Council of Women in it. We want our children to have a better chance of life and have better education, more and better opportunities. We have a great housing need. Industrially we have great problems to face, standing side by side with our men conscious that we face a world grown tired and weary in these years of war—a world sadder and wiser, a world capable in parts of reaction and blindness, but not, we feel, in whole. Are we going to build a world that will be the realisation of the dream 'born in a herdsman's shed,' for which men have given all? If we are, we must build it on righteousness and justice, going forth not afraid of anything but our own blindness, and intolerance and lack of wisdom."

The plans perfected during the convention for the League of Women Voters were presented by Mrs. Catt in a summary of the possibilities inherent in the League. The challenge to future activity of the women of the United States was given in these words: "We have dodged all controversial questions in

the interests of not antagonising opponents on these questions. We will do so no longer. We shall go forward to do that which we know to be right."

MARJORIE SHULER, Associate Editor, Woman Citizen.

Minimum Wage for Women \$15.50 per week, says Wage Conference. Washington.

The first wage conference held under the new minimum wage law for women in private employ in the District of Columbia has reported a minimum wage of \$15.50 per week. This conference was organised in March to consider the wages of women employed in private printing and publishing houses, and if its recommendation is accepted by the Minimum Wage Board, as is expected, every woman employed in such establishments in the District of Columbia must be paid not less than \$15.50 per week after the decision goes into effect. At present the Board found about 75 per cent. of the women in this industry in the District are paid less than \$15 per week, and nearly half of them are paid from \$12 to \$8 per week.

The wage conference, as required by law, was composed of three representatives of the employees, Mrs. Nettie Kirchner, Miss Nellie Sheiry, and Miss Essie Read, who under the rules of the Board were nominated by the women workers themselves by ballot; three members of the employers, namely, Charles F. Crane, Frank A. Hill, and Lee Baumgarten, nominated by ballot of the employers; and three representatives of the public, chosen by the Board, namely, Justice William Hitz of the District Supreme Court, Mrs. Frances G. Axtell of the U.S. Employees Compensation Commission, and Rev. Dr. John A. Ryan, professor of political science at Catholic University. In addition to these nine persons the Labour member of the Minimum Wage Board, Miss Ethel M. Smith, was a member of the conference, in accordance with the provision of the law requiring that one or more members of the Board shall serve in this capacity. The other members of the Board, Jesse C. Adkins, representing the public, and Joseph A. Berberich, representing the employers, also took part in the conference meetings.

The recommendation of the \$15.50 per week as the minimum wage upon which a woman without dependents can maintain herself at a proper standard of living in the District of Columbia was arrived at after four meetings of the conferees, and was unanimous. The employer member of the Board, Joseph A. Berberich, who is President of the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association of the District, was also present and agreed to the recommendation.

The items in cost of living allowed for by the conference under the minimum wage of \$15.50 per week:—

Table with 2 columns: Item and Amount. Items include Room and Board (\$9.00), Clothing (3.35), Laundry (0.75), Sickness, Dentistry, Oculist (0.50), Amusements (0.20), Vacation (0.25), Savings and Insurance (0.35), Church and Charity (0.10), Organisation Dues (0.10), Self-improvement (0.10), Car Fare (0.60), Other Incidentals (0.20).

Total \$15.50

For learners, or apprentices, the conference recommended rates of \$8 for the first three months, \$9 for the second three months, \$11 for the third three months, and \$12 for the fourth three months, the full wage of \$15.50 per week to apply at the end of one year.

Before the new minimum rates can be put into effect, a public hearing must be held after a thirty-day period of advertising, and then a sixty-day period must elapse to permit the employers to adjust their pay rolls. This will bring the new rates into operation probably some time in August, 1919.

The minimum wage law of the District of Columbia is mandatory, and the failure of any employer to pay the prescribed minimum renders him subject to fine or imprisonment.

ETHEL M. SMITH.

National Women's Trade Union League, Washington Press Service, 401, Continental Trust Building, 4/9/19.

CABLEGRAM TO MRS. CATT FROM PRESIDENT WILSON.

"Best wishes for Convention. I earnestly hope Suffrage amendment will soon be adopted.—WOODROW WILSON."

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

I wrote you in my last letter that, including the 15 States where women have full suffrage, and Arkansas and Texas, where they have the vote at primaries, the women of 26 States would be able to vote for the presidential electors, or, as we generally say, for President. There will be 27 if Vermont is included. The Legislature is still in session, but the Second House has not yet acted on the governor's veto. You can hardly understand what a muddle it is to have to consider the action of 48 State Governments on everything instead of one as you have it. The seven other States where they have the presidential votes are North Dakota, Nebraska, Indiana, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri. The Presidential Bill has gone through one house of the Iowa and the Tennessee Legislatures. We think it will pass the Second House in Iowa, but are doubtful as to Tennessee. Two years ago it went through one house of the Legislature there but even a telegram from President Wilson was not able to get it through the other house. Southern opposition is stubborn and the liquor interests are still strong in Tennessee. Missouri is really a Southern State, but, like Arkansas and Texas, it is more largely influenced by Western than Southern sentiment. We think, however, that the Presidential Bill would not have gone through the Second House there if our convention had not been held in St. Louis. It was drawing such immense audiences and raising so much enthusiasm that the Legislature simply had to accept it. The situation was rather dramatic. The Bill had gone through the Lower House, and was pending in the Senate, but it lacked one vote of a majority. The member who had pledged that vote was a judge who was in another part of the State holding court, and the suffragists very much feared that he could not return at the time set for voting on the bill. That morning he telegraphed that the case was finished but there was no train by which he could reach St. Louis. Instantly the suffragists telegraphed back, "A special train will be sent for you." This was done, but even it could not reach St. Louis until almost the very moment when the vote was to be taken. The friends in the Legislature had promised to cause delays if necessary, and, as the president of the Senate wanted the bill to pass, he agreed to this plan. A committee was at the railroad station, and as the special train pulled in they saw the judge standing on the platform. He sprung off, jumped into the automobile which was waiting and was rushed to the Senate chamber. The opponents had known nothing of all this, and were congratulating themselves that they would be able to defeat the bill, when all of a sudden the judge entered the Senate chamber, sauntering in with his hands in his pockets as if he had been there all the time—and the bill went through with flying colours.

The fact that more than 14,000,000 women will be entitled to vote for the presidential electors is having a very strong influence on the politicians, as they can unquestionably "swing" the election. Mrs. Catt's new organisation of Women Voters has added to their panic, and we shall be very much surprised if both parties do not hasten to put our amendment through soon after the Congress meets. There are well defined rumours that this will be about the middle of May, but nothing definite can be known at present.

Suffragists Demand Equal Economic Rights for Women Workers.

Washington. The National American Woman Suffrage Association, which by action of its convention in St. Louis, just concluded, has organised within its ranks a League of Women Voters, put itself emphatically on record in behalf of equal industrial rights and opportunities for women wage-earners. The convention also voted to call upon Congress to establish the Woman-in-Industry Service of the U.S. Department of Labour as a permanent bureau.

That women shall be free to choose their occupations without restriction through custom or prejudice was the demand of the delegates, who represent a membership of more than 2,000,000 women throughout the country. The resolution adopted reads in full as follows:—

"Whereas, during the war women have entered a great variety of occupations, achieving reputations for competence in them; and

"Whereas there is danger these wider opportunities may not be assured to women now that the war emergency is past; therefore be it

"Resolved, that we hold and urge that it is of utmost importance that women shall be free to choose their occupations

without restrictions through custom or prejudice, and that opportunities for advancement shall be opened for them equally with men. Toward that end we further urge that girls shall be given the same opportunities as boys in all vocational training."

The resolution in regard to the Woman-in-Industry Service of the U.S. Department of Labour reads as follows:—

"Whereas, the Woman-in-Industry Service of the U.S. Department of Labour was established as a result of the war emergency, and without provision for its permanence; and

"Whereas problems now presented regarding women workers are even more difficult than during the war, and require continuous study and adjustment, which can only be assured through a permanent bureau; therefore be it

"Resolved, that we call upon Congress to establish the Woman-in-Industry Service as a permanent women's bureau in the U.S. Department of Labour, with adequate funds for continuance and extension of its work.

"Resolved, further, that copies of this resolution be sent to all members of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives."

British Women to be Represented at National Convention of American Working Women.

Washington.

Miss Mary MacArthur, secretary of the British Women's Trade Union League, who will represent the organised working women of Great Britain at the National Convention of the National Women's Trade Union League of America, in Philadelphia, in June, has arrived in this country, and will visit a number of the local branches of the League during the next several weeks.

Miss MacArthur in private life is the widow of W. C. Anderson, Labour member of Parliament, whose death a short time ago deprived the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain of one of its ablest and most trusted leaders. Mrs. Anderson, or Miss MacArthur, was herself also a candidate for Parliament at the last general election, and ran second highest among the several women candidates. For many years she has been secretary of the British Women's Trade Union League, which organisation has maintained close relations with the National Women's Trade Union League of America.

Miss MacArthur is at present in New York, in conference with officers of the Women's Trade Union League of New York City. She is expected shortly to visit Washington, Boston, and the other Eastern branches of the League, and she will be one of the principal speakers at the mass meeting which will be held during the National Convention of the League in Philadelphia.

THE ONTARIO VENEREAL DISEASES PREVENTION ACT.

Several Canadian readers of the *International Woman Suffrage News* have written to the Editor for her opinion of the Ontario Act. The society which is perhaps entitled to speak with the greatest authority on this subject is that founded by Josephine Butler, now known as the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

This society has carefully studied all phases of this question in the light of the principles of human justice and liberty and sex equality, and has watched the various experiments and experiences of governments, societies, and individuals made during fifty years.

The Editor, accordingly, asked the secretary of the society to write an open letter on the subject. We have pleasure in giving her reply:—

April 26th, 1919.

Dear Miss Sheepshanks,

You asked me to make some comments upon the Ontario Venereal Disease Prevention Act, and I will endeavour to do so in this letter. My chief difficulty is that I do not know how this Act is being administered. Acts which may be just and equal in the letter are apt not to be so in administration, especially when they deal with sex morals or venereal disease.

The first point I notice in the Ontario law is that any individual charged with any offence may be caused to undergo an examination to ascertain if they are infected with venereal disease. This means that persons who may ultimately prove to have been wrongly arrested are subject to such examination before their case has been heard. In short, it gives power to the police to arrest on any charge anyone whom they may wish to have medically examined. The examination is not to be part of the usual procedure for all prisoners. It is left to the

medical officer to select the prisoners he will have examined, and this officer has power to order detention of such prisoners if found diseased until there is no further risk of infection. In cases of gonorrhœa, such detention, if intended to be effective, would be likely to last at least two years, and in some cases much longer. It seems a very dangerous precedent to allow individuals to be put away for a period of years without legal trial and merely on the result of a medical examination which is notoriously inconclusive and unreliable. If the detention is only going to be for a few weeks, it will, like the French system, be utterly futile. The people will be "whitewashed" but not cured, and the fact that they are at liberty will give a false sense of security, because people will believe they are cured. Then there is the clause that gives the medical officer power to act on the denunciation of one person by another, and to compel the denounced persons to obtain and submit a medical report as to their condition. If the medical report indicates the presence of venereal disease, the medical officer can, at his discretion, remove the person to hospital or other "proper place" and keep him there. Within these two sections it is quite possible to fit a full system of regulated prostitution. It only depends upon the sense in which the "discretion," vested solely in the police and medical officer, is exercised. In any case it would appear that under these sections all the ordinary safeguards of civil liberties are abolished.

It seems to me that the first section of the Ontario Act will tend to work out somewhat on the following lines:—

Men charged with offences under the vagrancy laws, and the more wretched of criminals, will be likely to be examined and detained; in general, however, the Act will be applied against women, who will be rounded up on various charges but really suspected of prostitution. These will be examined, and the obviously infected ones detained. The others will be re-arrested at intervals for purposes of examination. Then it will be generally understood that the women who are professional prostitutes and will report regularly to a doctor will not as a rule be arrested, but police efforts will be directed against the "amateur" or clandestine woman who does not want to put herself under medical and police control. If the administration follows these lines then you have the complete regulation system, and wherever this sort of legislation is passed it does tend to follow these lines. Thus we have the Prisoners' Detention Act in New South Wales, which is for the examination and detention of convicted prisoners, sentenced to imprisonment. Of this the Hon. Fred. Flowers, ex-Minister of Public Health, New South Wales, said: "I understand it is worked in this way: a whisper is given by the police, and a term of imprisonment instead of a fine. It is really intended for the detention of the prostitutes." That is the matter in a sentence: legislation nominally equal, but in practice aimed at and administered against women.

The clause relating to denunciation is a very dangerous one, and I should have thought quite useless. Generally speaking, it works extremely badly. Flexner on the Danish system of denunciation, which is practically the same as that in the Ontario Act, says:*

"Denunciation aims to bring these concealed sources to light; offers them treatment, if they are intelligent enough to take advantage of such opportunity; and adds the State's right and power to compel a proper course of action if, for any reason whatsoever, they are differently minded.

"As a matter of fact, the thing is by no means so simple. In the first place, with the best intention, the patient may be mistaken as to the source of his or her infection. Prostitution is promiscuous on both sides. The women notoriously consort in quick succession with many men; men often consort with different women. The periods of incubation are more or less indefinite and variable, so that a mere reckoning back to a particular act of intercourse is not conclusive. In one set of cases, carefully studied from this standpoint, over half of those questioned were unable to throw any light on the subject.

"The very difficulty in question opens the way to error and abuse. . . . The experience of Copenhagen has quite fully justified these doubts. Denunciation is an invitation to blackmail; it can be, and has been, employed by men simply to rid themselves of women of whom they have tired; for, while in theory equally applicable to both sexes, under existing conditions women have most to fear from it. For this reason physicians do not regularly report to the police the alleged sources of infection; nor do the police always act even on such denunciations as reach them. . . . As the police cannot permit themselves to be made an indiscriminate instrument of private oppression or vengeance, they use their own discretion as to whether they will act on a given 'denunciation.' Necessarily, therefore, their action is so uncertain as to be quite ineffective; with anything less than the most complete integrity it might readily be something worse than uncertain. The officials are therefore in serious doubt as to whether denunciation is workable even under the comparatively simple conditions of the Nor-

* See "Prostitution in Europe," pp. 354-367.

wegian and Danish capitals. Of a commission of nine persons recently appointed to consider the question in Copenhagen, five members favoured repeal; four favoured retention, not on the ground of its general value, but as a means of reaching utterly reckless or insane individuals who go so far as to boast of their success in disseminating disease.

"But perhaps a more serious objection to denunciation from a purely sanitary standpoint lies here: that it continues the hurtful association of venereal disease with the police. . . ."

I understand Captain Gordon Bates, C.A.M.C., is a supporter of the Ontario Act, and I was interested to see the following paragraph in an article of his appearing in the *International Journal of Surgery*, September, 1918:—

"In Ontario the problem to be faced was almost entirely that of clandestine prostitution, laws enforced by the police having practically eliminated organised commercial prostitution in the province. On the streets of towns in Ontario there were always hundreds of young girls ready to sell their favours to any stranger. As a rule these girls were under twenty years of age, and generally worked during the day, depending largely on regular occupation for a living. It was found that a large number of them, almost a third of the cases met with, pursued this manner of life without charging a fee."

Here in this paragraph we have the real difficulty against which all the systems of regulation break down, and become abominably unjust in administration. The police in Ontario claim to have suppressed commercial prostitution, but large numbers of girls under twenty earning their living by legitimate work are living promiscuously, and a third of these charge no fee. To put it plainly, there are now in the towns of Ontario, as in all other large towns, a number of young women living in the same way as many men live—doing their day's work reasonably well, and then walking about the streets ready and willing to spend the night with anybody of the opposite sex who proffers an invitation. *The problem of their health and their morals is neither better nor worse than the problem of the health and morals of their temporary partners.* Yet experience shows that for the most part this is not recognised by police, doctors, or military authorities. In the eyes of the authorities it is women who spread disease, women whose immorality must be suppressed, and women who must be reformed, and I fear, in spite of the words "any individual" in the Act, that under civilian conditions it will chiefly be women whom it is thought necessary to examine and detain for venereal disease. I think I am right in saying that men are not arrested in Canada for promiscuity, nor for ordinary street solicitation and accosting, but that street solicitation is a legal offence in women. If this is so, is it not clear that all those girls under twenty who are not "prostitutes," but are promiscuous, will simply hold their liberty at the discretion of the police. It only requires a charge—any charge—and they can be arrested, physically examined and detained. Now that class of man is not likely to be arrested at all. His promiscuity does not hand him over to police discretion, and the usual effect of this sort of legislation is that the police are given power, at their discretion, to arrest women for immorality. If they confine their activities to professional prostitutes the legislation is ineffective, and if they bring "amateur" women within its scope this opens the way for grave injustice and mistakes.

The rest of the Ontario Act does not call for special comment. The free-treatment provision is admirable, and the provisions against blackmail will probably be necessary. The real danger of the Act lies in the enormous discretionary powers it gives to the medical officer and to the police, coupled, of course, with the difficulties of proof, the unreliability of the medical examination, the extreme doubt as to when a person is really free from infection, and the fact that public opinion is so biased by a double standard of morals.

As you know, this Association has gone fully into the question of penalising the transmission of venereal disease, and has decided that a general measure is not likely to be effective, but that it could be better dealt with by altering the laws of marriage and divorce to meet cases of marital infection, protecting children from infection by negligence, and educating people in the fact that all promiscuous intercourse is likely to be dangerous.

For the sake of brevity I have omitted a detailed criticism on the medical side, but perhaps these comments may serve to show why this Association, after fifty years' experience and study of legislation against venereal disease, is opposed to these compulsory police measures, and has no belief in their effectiveness in reducing venereal disease.—Yours sincerely,

ALISON NEILANS,
Editor of *The Shield*, and
Secretary of the Association for Moral and
Social Hygiene.

"Women Who Win."

The cinema has been put to good use by "Women's Service," the women's employment bureau organised and carried on by the London Society for Women's Suffrage. The object of the play is to show how essential it is for girls to be trained if they are to have successful careers. Three sisters, finding no suitable openings, on the advice of the bureau get trained—one as a nurse, one as a journalist, one as a gardener; the play depicts their adventures, successes, and romances. Queen Alexandra, the Crown Princess of Sweden, and other Royal personages allowed themselves to be included in some scenes of the play.

ICELAND.

REVISION OF THE MARRIAGE LAWS.

Iceland has appointed Professor Larusi Bjarnason to report on a proposed revision of the laws of marriage and of the illegitimate child.

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