

THE VOTE  
JUNE 1, 1917.  
ONE PENNY.

## Representation of the People Bill: Second Reading Debate.

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 1917

Edited by C. DESPARD.

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

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## REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

Second Reading Debate, May 22 and 23, 1917.

### Impressions from Behind the Grille.

Will this be the last session in which women visitors to the House of Commons will be compelled to survey the scene below from behind iron bars? With the wives of 250 Members of Parliament requesting the removal of this antiquated pretence of hiding the women who, officially, are not supposed to be present, added to the recent attack, led by Mr. W. H. Dickinson, from the floor of the House, and the inevitable coming of women as voters and Members, the next adjournment should see the removal of the grille and the provision of better accommodation for women, enabling them to see and hear in comfort. It was good to find that Lieut. J. B. Watson, the new Member for Stockton, in an admirable maiden speech, following immediately on the moving and seconding of the amendment opposing the second reading, declared boldly for the removal of the grille,

"so that in the near future the women of this country may look down upon this Chamber with unrestricted vision and unrestrained hearing. They should be able to look down upon this House, which perchance at no distant date they may adorn by their presence, and before many years have passed they may take a useful and honourable part in its deliberations."

The opposition to the Bill was chiefly on the ground that nothing should be done during a great war. "Do it—but not now." This cry was met emphatically by another: "Do it now!" Speaker after speaker pointed out that now is the accepted time, for, if postponed till after the war, the deplorable spectacle would be witnessed of party strife and rancour again in full force over a Reform Bill, involving months of wasted time while urgent questions were pressing for solution.

In forecasting such a shipwreck of statesmanship, and in looking back to the impossible tangle of last year over the Register Bill, the ardent devotion of Members to the solution brought forward by the Speaker's Conference was the strongest condemnation by men of the manner in which they had mismanaged the representation of the people in the Mother of Parliaments. One after another they pointed to the ridiculous, costly and cumbersome machinery by which the House of Commons was elected, to the crying need for reform, to the impossible situation, and to the "priceless opportunity" which the absence of party spirit afforded of "getting something done." For once the welfare of the nation took precedence of party advantage. True, Lord Hugh Cecil, who was the *enfant terrible* of the debate, flung out the taunt that this was a party measure, but Mr. Walter Long made the admirable reply that if by a party measure meant a measure which is the result of consultations between all parties, then the more of such measures the better! And it has taken a terrible war to drive home this lesson.

There was scarcely a speech in the debate in which reference was not made to Woman Suffrage. Indeed, we hear on excellent authority that Woman Suffrage is the most popular clause in the Bill. Mr. Asquith's example on March 28 evidently had great effect, for recantation after recantation was made by men who had been opponents, but not one supporter of votes for women joined the diminishing ranks of the antis. In recognising the justice of the women's claims to citizenship, Captain O'Neill, an Ulster Unionist, who explained at length the reasons for his conver-



sion to Woman Suffrage, did not hesitate to say that the mothers of the nation bear as great a part in its life as the men who go forth to fight its battles. Sir Henry Craik, who had his doubts about what he called "this wide extension of the suffrage to women," and who voted against the second reading of the Bill, was moved to declare that if he found opinion in the House and in the country favoured the proposal it would be his duty and the duty of others "no longer to fight the point but cordially to seek the best arrangement for carrying it into effect." Recent proceedings at the Court of the University of Glasgow—to which Miss Murray called attention in THE VOTE of May 4—made themselves felt. Lord Hugh Cecil, who has long advocated woman suffrage but who voted against the Second Reading on various grounds, among others that he refused to be forcibly fed with Benger's Food in the form of the Bill, attacked the limited franchise proposed for women, and declared that he would be in line with its comic element if he suggested that mothers-in-law should have two votes. Perhaps we may see Sir George Reid, who comes from a country where women vote on equal terms with men—no fancy franchises—but who voted against the Bill on the ground that the war must be the one and only consideration, coming back, as he promised, to support the Government, in company with Lord Hugh, believing that although no one gets all they want in the Bill, it contains many advantages, including the breaking down of the sex barrier, which are too good to lose. Sir Frederick Banbury had no great siege guns with which to support his attack on the Bill, but made play with the ludicrous age restriction for women, and seemed to think that Sir Walter Scott had once and for ever completely and correctly gauged the character of woman. Mr. Arnold Ward was more definite and less sententious. He spoke frankly but pitifully as a strong opponent of woman suffrage, but, not daring to advocate a direct rejection, sheltered behind the Referendum. He got no comfort on this point from Mr. Walter Long, replying for the Government, but suffragists, inside and outside of Parliament, must recognise that a strong attack will be made in Committee on the Woman Suffrage Clause; it behoves all

supporters to be prepared and to rally in force to carry the clause to victory.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald made an admirable statement of the case for Woman Suffrage quite apart from the war, which, he considered, had added no new argument but was the occasion, he was glad to see, for the inclusion of women in a Franchise Act. Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck also went back far beyond the war in championing justice to women, declaring that their claims were as old as Christianity, which taught the equality of men and women in the eyes of God.

Mr. Walter Long's summing up, immediately before the Division, was masterly and genial; he dealt with the opposition to the Bill in a conciliatory and generous manner, but was strong in his insistence upon the need for passing the Bill now, so as to be ready with machinery for a really representative Parliament to deal with after-war problems of reconstruction. "Let us be fortified," he said, "by the strength which only a contented and satisfied people can give to the Government of the country."

On the question of how long it would take to pass the Bill, Mr. Long ventured the suggestion of six weeks, and Mr. Bonar Law interjected the remark that he hoped it would be done in less time. After the Bill has become an Act, six or eight months of hard work will be necessary for compiling the new register of voters. The Government's spokesmen impressed on the House the urgency of the matter; there was no other solution available; let this one be accepted without obstruction, it was not a party measure; no member of the Government was a member of the Conference. This was the moment for consideration and co-operation, not for conflict.

The House will reassemble after the Whitsuntide recess on Tuesday, June 5; the Bill is put down as the business before the House on Wednesday and Thursday, June 6 and 7—an indication that the Government means to lose no time. Our message to the men who govern us is:

*Include Women in the Bill, pass it without delay, and end the Fifty Years of Women's Fight for Justice.*

(For Report of the Debate, see page 237-238.)

## Women's Freedom League.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

### LONDON AND SUBURBS.

**Sunday, June 3.**—Open-air Meetings, Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 12 noon. Speakers: Miss Anna Munro, Miss Margaret Hodge. Clapham Common, 3.30. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro.

**Wednesday, June 6.**—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Margaret Hodge. Subject: "The Russian Revolution, or the Evolution of Democracy under a Despotism." Admission free. Tea (6d.) can be obtained in the Café. Croydon Branch.—Drawing-room meeting, The White House, Heathurst-road, Sanderstead, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Abadam, on "Our Solidarity."

London Branches Council Meeting, 144, High Holborn, 6 p.m.  
**Sunday, June 10.**—Herne Hill Branch Drawing-room Meeting, 129, East Dulwich-grove, S.E. (by kind invitation

of Mrs. Mockford). Speaker: Miss Abadam, on "Feminism and its Vital Outlook." Tea at 4 p.m. Admission free.

**Wednesday, June 13.**—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Cobden Sanderson. Subject: "My Experiences of Rescue Work." Admission free. Tea (6d.).

**Friday, June 22.**—Croydon Public Meeting at W.F.L. Office, 32a, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30.

**Thursday, June 28.**—Mid London Branch Annual Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 7 p.m.

**Friday, July 6.**—President's Birthday Party, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 7 p.m. Admission 1s.

### PROVINCES.

**Monday, June 4.**—Middlesbrough; Branch Meeting, 7.30 p.m., 231, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road, Northampton.—Afternoon Meeting, at "Ambleside," Abington Park (by kind permission of Mrs. Branch). Speaker: Mrs. Despard.

**Wednesday, June 6.**—Portsmouth: Afternoon Whist Drive, Unitarian Schoolroom, High-street, 3 o'clock. Tickets 1s. each. Middlesbrough. Suffrage Club Discussion, 7.30.

**Tuesday, June 12.**—Portsmouth: Members' Meeting, Suffrage Rooms, 2, Kent-road, 7.30 p.m., prompt.

### Scotland.

**Wednesday, June 6.**—Edinburgh. Opening of new premises at 13, Charlotte-street. Speakers: Misses Murray, Munro and McLelland. Tea at 7.30 p.m.

## We draw special attention to—

**June 6.**—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Margaret Hodge. Subject: "The Russian Revolution, or the Evolution of Democracy under a Despotism."

## WOMEN AND FOOD CONTROL.

### Wisdom from the West.

A cabled message from Washington, on May 29, stated that Miss Rankin, the first woman member of the House of Representatives, made her maiden speech in favour of an amendment of the Food Bill to the effect that the services of women should be utilised as far as possible in the making of the projected food survey throughout the United States. Miss Rankin laid stress on women's familiarity with the food problem, and emphasized the fact that the various girls' colleges were turning out a large number of young women capable of serving the public. The speech, we are informed, was heard by a crowded House, and the applause was spontaneous and enthusiastic. On its conclusion the House, with characteristic American gallantry, unanimously voted in favour of the amendment. The first of the Government's Food Bills, involving appropriations of £2,954,000 for the survey and stimulation of the food supply, was passed by the House on May 28. It is useful when men's gallantry can be a synonym for wisdom.

Miss Eunice G. Murray, writing on

### "GIVE US POWER,"

points out that of all classes of the community the one upon whom the greatest burden has fallen is the housewife. She is confronted daily with the problem of how to live; she sees prices advancing rapidly; she is exhorted to save and besought to keep her men and children healthy upon a reduced outlay while food becomes scarcer. The last report issued by the Board of Trade shows that the retail price of food has risen exactly 98 per cent. since the outbreak of war.

The Food Controller has had a curious effect: as soon as he touches a commodity up goes the price. Since Lord Devonport came into office, the poor have suffered seriously—they have been denied their fair supplies on the one hand and plundered on the other. Lord Devonport himself, in the House of Lords, admitted "that since the shortage of potatoes and the increased demand for substitutes there has been a great rise in prices, a great deal of which has been caused by unpatriotic speculation." Why did he not stop the speculators before they had secured the market, and were dividing the plunder? Good margarine now costs as much as the best butter cost in 1914; marmalade, once a cheap food, is now only a luxury, it is banished from the poor man's table; a kettle or a saucepan costs exactly twice as much as before the war. Wages have risen, but not in proportion to the rise in living; in many cases wages are the same as before the war, in others they are reduced.

What is the Government doing to help the overburdened housewife? Less than nothing. Even Lord Milner, rarely sympathetic to the woes of others, recognises that serious position. He says "we must have more food and increase our production of food in this country. It is an absolutely vital necessity. Something will have to give way to this our supreme need."

The one way to help is by giving women not only the vote but responsible posts, with ample salaries, and power to solve the problem and difficulties which have baffled men. From now onwards let men and women unite in solving the difficulties that confront us; together let them face the future. The brains of every thinker, irrespective of sex, are needed. Give women equal political status with men, then the Mother Country, glad that its lagging days are over, will advance with the daughter nations, who have put power in the hands of women for the common good.

## HOUSE-WARMING AT NINE ELMS.

The level of the thermometer on May 19 went far to show our official house-warming to be a superfluous function. Nevertheless, we very heartily appreciated the warmth of sympathy expressed by our guests with the work which we are endeavouring to do at Nine Elms. After they had partaken of tea and Miss Cole's excellent cakes, which the company were encouraged to eat with a clear conscience, since they were all made of non-wheat flour, Mrs. Despard told how the work had grown out of the small beginning made in the first autumn of the war, and for which we were indebted to Mrs. Carey, who had generously paid the first year's rent of 1, Everett-street. She recalled the pride with which we entered and began the work there—a pride which paled before the superior glories of the corner house in which we now found ourselves, for in the two years and a half we had grown out of the two small houses which had served us as restaurant and guest house. She heartily wished that Mrs. Carey and Mrs. Tippett, to whose undaunted energy the initial success of the venture had been due, had been able to be with us on the present occasion. She paid, as did all the other speakers, a very warm tribute to the excellent and valorous work which had been undertaken and achieved by the residents—Miss Holmes and Miss Cole.

Mr. F. A. Pearce, to whom the Settlement is indebted not only for material support, but who is a regular and valued helper, spoke of the very real pleasure which it gave him to be counted among the Settlement workers. He had been attracted not only by the work, but also by the spirit which animated it. He begged for an increased measure of support. The hands of the residents were already over full, but various activities could be started if promises of assistance from outsiders could be obtained. The Nine Elms Boy Scouts were already in evidence, and the girls were waiting for a troop of Girl Guides to be formed. Daily helpers to serve the children's meals from 12 to 1 were urgently needed. He drew attention to the fact that, of the long list of gifts wanted posted on the wall, a portrait of Mrs. Despard and a bath had already been promised. A chest of drawers, linoleum for passages and staircase, a screen, a nursery guard, a clothes-horse, sheets and pillow-cases, were still needed.

Mrs. Corner recited a charming little poem of E. Nesbitt's which, she said, expressed that spirit of loving service, entirely free from the taint of what is so falsely called "charity," which had always been the motive force in the activities of the Settlement.

The Rev. Alexander Irvine, D.Lit., author of "My Lady of the Chimney Corner" and "From the Bottom Up," who had run a Settlement for years in the Bowery of New York, declared himself to be an expert on the subject of schemes for social betterment. Of the many which he had examined, none more nearly fulfilled the Christian ideal than that for which he now asked the support of his hearers. He exhorted the workers to continue their good work in spite of possible discouragement, illustrating his counsel by relating one of Tolstoi's stories of the simple faith of a Russian peasant.

Dr. G. B. Clark set the minds of the non-vegetarians present at rest as to the value of our feeding centre, by pointing out that the food supplied was as nutritious as an ordinary meat diet.

### CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

In reply to a question by Mr. Aneurin Williams as to when this Bill would be proceeded with, Mr. Bonar Law replied that he must wait until after the reassembling of the House. It would not be taken in the first week.

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The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS. if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

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## THE MAN POWER CATASTROPHE.

"About eight million people have been killed in the war; men who should have been creators of a new world."

—GENERAL SAUTS.

The most tragic of human experiments is now gathering its last unspeakable harvest upon the battlefields of Europe, providing the most prodigious spectacle of horror that the world has ever seen—the experiment of exclusive man-government and power.

Civilisation, which has ruled the communities of men in the interests of material splendour and aggrandisement, which has repudiated the dual life of man and woman, has now run mad and, as we know it, is doomed to extinction in that vast cemetery of Europe, which but such a short time ago was the homes of the people and the ways of woods and pastures. So must come to an end all experiments of man which are irreconcilable with the divine order of the universe, made manifest for all who seek the aims of the Spirit.

Men have governed the world, and upon the world has come the doom of this war. Eight millions of the sons of men have been immolated upon the altar of this terrible experiment. Millions of women sit stupefied with sorrow in desolate homes. There are no words to measure these things; they are awful beyond human speech. We can but turn to those men who represent the governing power of our nation and bid them look upon our sorrows, and consider the graves of our sons; and from out the fearful disunity of life we ask them to call upon us to help them to reconstruct a new world.

Their experiment has failed.

We have yet to learn that any human experiment can succeed which arrogates to itself a right of power over another class, sex, or people. Men have talked with admiration for nearly two thousand years of Plato; they have written thousands of volumes asserting their homage; yet the Republic of Plato is still unaccomplished.

We may consider words from the dialogue of the Republic: "We have been long waiting in the expectation that you would specify the conditions under which children are to be begotten, and the manner of rearing them after they are born; in fact, that you would give a complete description of the

community of women and children, for we are of opinion that the mode of carrying out this idea according as it is right or wrong will be a matter of vital importance to a commonwealth." The answer goes: "As far as the guardianship of an ideal State is concerned, duly qualified women must share in the life and official labours of the duly qualified men, since we find that they are competent to the work and of kindred nature with the men."

Yet the word "woman" is not mentioned in our English constitution; and our governing men, with their classical education, have professed immense surprise that women have been found competent to undertake men's work in this war. This is because men have not constituted themselves guardians of an "ideal State." They have put considerations of power and material wealth before the power which comes of making fit the conditions under which children are begotten; and have ignored the wealth which would accrue to a nation from the co-operation and advice of women.

We can no longer call our Parliament in any sense of the word a Witenagemot: an assembly of wise men. Neither could we hope to achieve any measure of justice when half of the human race stands without the councils where justice is supposed to be considered. So have come to shipwreck a thousand years of dreams and martyrdom and struggle: the lopped and deficient activities of races where the Mother Spirit has been denied equal freedom and equal responsibility.

On its material side the modern world has appeared as a marvel of enterprise, skill and genius; on its social side it has presented a condition of anarchy, disease, and widespread poverty. For the kingdoms which man has advanced have been kingdoms of this world: of aggression, luxury, labour, exploitation. He has sought to banish the "Angel of the Presence of the Infinite." Without that Presence he denies his right to a divine heritage. Man has forgotten that the aim of life is life itself. It is for Democracy to avow that an aristocracy of sex is more evil in its influences than an hereditary aristocracy.

In the reconstruction of society before us we demand that the centre of interest shall shift; that it shall not remain a centre of commercial and personal advancement and intrigue, but shall be one of social amelioration, of the healing pursuit of art, and the consideration of a sane philosophy of life. Patience, which woman has learnt in a hard school of repression, will stand her in good stead in the nation's behalf. She will set her face against such panic legislation as the proposed Criminal Law Amendment Act; as also against all *laissez-faire* attitudes towards the pressing problems of government. If man asks for efficiency in the world of labour, she will demand it in the kingdom of the mind.

The men of our nation have shown us that they can die with courage; we ask of them what would seem to be a harder thing—to live with courage. We ask them not to destroy the earth, but to join with us in creating a new world, where life may become for all the chance of a great and beautiful adventure.

EDITH MARY MOORE.

## Irish Women and the Convention

The Joint Committee of Irish Suffrage Societies has sent a resolution to the Prime Minister asking that Irish Women's Suffrage Societies may be represented at the Convention, on the same basis as other organised interests.

## THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

### Extracts from the Debate in the House of Commons, May 22 and 23, on the Second Reading.

THE HOME SECRETARY (Sir George Cave), who moved that the Bill be read a second time, and as "the honest broker for the Bill" urged its acceptance as a fair compromise, said with regard to woman suffrage: "Perhaps I may be allowed to put this one question to Members who have held, and still hold, strong views on this matter, namely, whether it is possible for us, having called upon women for so large a contribution to the work of carrying on this war, and having received so splendid a response to that call, to refuse to women a voice in moulding the future of the country which their help and devoted self-sacrifice have done so much to save?"

### Include Woman Suffrage or Drop the Bill.

COLONEL SANDERS, moving the amendment that it was undesirable to proceed further with the Bill owing to the war, said: "I have always been in favour of women's suffrage. I agree that it is doubly necessary now, not only out of gratitude to women for what they have done in the course of the war, but, I think, in mere justice. One thing one notices all over the country is that women are now taking the place of men. When the men come back the question must arise as to whether the women are to stay or the men to come in. How those questions are to be settled I do not for a moment pretend to say; but I do say that it is only just and fair that the women should have a voice in settling it. Therefore, I think, women's suffrage ought to be an essential thing in a Franchise Bill brought in at this moment. What do I find as to the position of women suffrage in this Bill? It is the one thing that is to be left in the air; it is the one thing for which the Government does not stand out. . . . I say, if you are to treat women fairly, we ought to get this undertaking from the Government, that if the women are left out, that either by amendment in this House or by amendment in another place, that defect should be remedied, or the Government will undertake to drop the other clauses of the Bill. In default of that, I say that this Bill does not adequately deal with the question of women's franchise."

LIEUT.-COLONEL ARCHER-SHEE, seconding the amendment, stated that "women preponderate greatly over the men. . . . Therefore, by giving women the vote you give them the main political power. Then, again, women have not been asked whether they wish to have the vote at all. . . . Hon. Members talk about women having earned the vote, but they do not want it. Why give them something they do not want?"

MR. J. B. WATSON, who strongly advocated the removal of the grille, and warmly supported the Bill, including women, anticipating their advent as Members of the House, added: "Once you have granted, once you have agreed to give the franchise to women, the only logical way in which it can be given is to give it at the same age as that at which men enjoy it."

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS: "To the question of woman suffrage I am opposed as strongly and as honestly as others are in their support of it."

### A New Distinction Invented.

LORD HUGH CECIL: "What the Bill lacks is that most indispensable feature in any proposal for women's suffrage—it lacks anything in the least resembling finality. You do not sweep away the distinction between the two sexes, but you invent a new distinction which is as absurd and as contumelious to any intelligence as the distinction which now exists. It seems to be profoundly unsatisfactory. The proper method, I should have thought, would have been to have separated women's suffrage from the rest of the Bill and to have brought in a Bill of a single line abolishing the distinction between the sexes, and to have done that first before you decided or attempted to decide on the general question of the franchise."

SIR JOHN SIMON: "I regard the proposals for women's suffrage in this Bill as being an essential and integral part of the whole measure, and the Bill would have lost altogether the balance which it now preserves if there had been on the part of the Government any attempt to introduce the Bill without including women."

MR. COCHRANE: "In my opinion, the case for the extension of the franchise to women has been enormously strengthened during the last three years. . . . It is only a truism to say, I think the House will agree, that it would have been impossible to have carried on the war without them. . . . After the war, as has already been stated, problems of the greatest importance to this country and to the Empire will come up for settlement, in which women will be greatly interested. I refer particularly to problems arising out of demobilisation, problems of labour, problems of child welfare, and such like, and it seems to me that it would be a most lamentable thing if women had no voice in their settlement. I think that this change which is proposed is

inevitable, and I hope it will be conceded with as large a volume of unanimity as it is possible to get."

SIR WILLIAM BULL: "Most of the House know that I have been a suffragist all my life."

MR. BLAIR, who opposed the Second Reading, said: "I am determined, as far as this Bill is concerned, not to go back on my pledges, made four years ago. I am further convinced that the great majority of the women themselves in this country have not changed on this very important question. . . . I challenge Hon. Members who have served in France to say that they have ever heard in France the cry of 'Votes for Women.'"

### Women's Work Always Essential.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: "Surely our supreme duty is to do something to secure that the next Parliament shall be representative of the People. . . . From my point of view I do not believe that the war has contributed one single new argument in favour of women's suffrage. Anybody who has entered intimately into the great concerns of life, the life of the home, the life of the State, and the life of the citizen, must have known long ago of the magnificent part and the essential part that woman has been playing in all those spheres. There is not a single public cause of righteousness, of justice, of mercy, or of wisdom, but woman has been connected with it. Her work has been essential. They tell us that after the war is over the great problems between men's labour and women's labour will have to be faced. Where were they in 1911, 1912, and 1913? Those problems were growing up then. There was not a single industry and there was not a single profession in the country that was not being crowded by those problems. This House, elected by men representative only of men, was taking upon itself the right to decide what woman's place in the workshop should be, and we passed a very intricate and very elaborate system of factory laws which affected woman's labour, which limited woman's labour, and which showed woman's labour the particular channel along which to run. That was precisely the same problem as this House and this country will have to face when the war is over. So far as service to the nation is concerned, what would our nation have been without the service that women were giving long before the war broke out? This is a very tardy recognition of the obligation that this nation and every civilised nation is under to the woman worker, and I am very glad that the war at any rate should be made the excuse and the occasion for that recognition being embodied in a franchise Act."

SIR H. CRAIK: "I see great difficulties as regards female suffrage, and I am perfectly certain that if I examine my conscience honestly I shall find that my opposition to that has come from the belief, mistaken or otherwise, that the granting of the suffrage to women will be against the interests of women in many ways, and is against what I believe to be the views of the majority of the women of the country now."

### The Women's Cause is Just.

SIR GORDON HEWART: "With regard to women's suffrage and proportional representation I will only say this: those who support the first are convinced—and, as I believe, rightly convinced—that the cause is just."

MR. ANEURIN WILLIAMS: "I believe we all feel that the only possible basis of settlement or basis of justice to all parties is not to attempt to get one opinion, but to aim at absolute justice for men and women, civilians, soldiers and sailors—all classes and all opinions."

MR. WILSON-FOX: "I understand from the figures supplied to the House yesterday by the Home Secretary that, under the Bill, if the women's age be fixed at thirty, there would be an addition of 6,000,000 voters to the electorate. I should not be disposed myself to vote for an extension which would add a larger number than would come under the alternative age of thirty-five, which has been estimated at 4,500,000."

### Woman Suffrage Could Not be Left Out.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: "Whatever your wishes might be, and however much you might desire to go so far and no further, in view of the strong feelings in this House and in the country when questions of the franchise were considered, women suffrage could not be left aside."

CAPTAIN O'NEILL: "I think that the women should get the vote, even though it might be quite another question as to whether they should sit in the House of Commons or not. It is true that women cannot take part in war, but they do bear their part in other aspects of our life which are perhaps more important than war. I never cease to marvel at the courage and fortitude with which women face childbirth, and in my view, although they cannot fight for their country, they do, in respect of that matter alone, bear in the general life of any community or any nation a part fully as great as that which men bear when they go to war



and fight their country's battles. I must confess that the general conduct of women during this war, and the fact that they have undertaken physical duties which I personally should have thought it impossible for them to carry out, have caused me, possibly illogically, in view of the reasons with which I supported my former opinion, to change my view, and I shall certainly not oppose this Bill on any question of extending the franchise to women."

#### Women Must be Represented.

Mr. LESLIE SCOTT: "I think that women have shown by their work during the war that they are fit to exercise the vote, and that the industrial problems of the employment of women that will have to be solved after the war will be so vital that I think women ought to have the vote to be represented in this House."

Mr. WARDLE: "The more closely you associate the people with this House, the more certain will it be that the Government and the people will tend more and more to become one. . . . We ask you to take a pretty strong dose of real reform and do something which will associate the people of the country with the Government of the country in a manner in which they have never been associated in the past, and the House of Commons will take on a new glory and a new position in the minds of the people."

#### Majority in Favour.

Sir GEORGE REID: "The only basis on which this Bill is justifiable is that the majority of the people in this country are in favour of its provisions. I think they are as to the female franchise."

Mr. HAYES FISHER: "No Government pressure is to be put upon anybody to vote as regards the inclusion or exclusion of women, or as regards proportional representation. . . . So far as women voters are concerned, I have always followed Mr. Disraeli, and so far as proportional representation is concerned I have always followed Mr. Gladstone."

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY: "Who expected women not to do well in the war? It must be remembered that the women who wanted the vote wanted it before the war, and they wanted it for reasons not connected with the war. . . . My right hon. friend the Member for Oxford University (Lord H. Cecil) asked yesterday what happens to a woman at thirty which will qualify her for having a vote which will not entitle her to one when she is twenty-nine years and 364 days old. I do not know. It is a riddle which I give up. I venture to say everybody in this House will have to give that up, and that when you come to whether or not you shall grant the franchise to men of twenty-one and women of twenty-one, you will have to decide that you must grant it to women of twenty-one. If you admit that there is no sex disqualification between men and women, you cannot say that a woman is not entitled to a vote on the same terms as a man. This is absolutely impossible."

Mr. DICKINSON: "When the time comes to raise the matter on the particular clause, I hope the House will at last put an end to what has been, in my opinion, a crying injustice, namely, the total disfranchisement of woman for Parliamentary purposes throughout the country."

#### Drudges or Citizens?

Colonel Lord HENRY CAVENTISH-BENTINCK: "I do not base the claims for women on the work which they have done during this war. I base the claims for women on higher grounds than that. It seems to me that the claims of women are as old as Christianity itself. If our religion has not taught us the equal value of men and women in the eyes of the Maker, then our religion has taught us very little indeed. If that is granted, then women have a right equally with men to co-operate in the framing of society so that it will express the image of a better time. Some Hon. Members have a great objection to women having the vote because they have not fought in this war. That does not seem to me to be the point. The point is that we have made the fullest use of the wonderful self-sacrifice which women have shown in this war. There is nothing which we have not asked of them, and the question seems to me to be this: are we to treat women as drudges or as citizens? I feel very strongly that they have a right to be treated as citizens, and that is why I cordially welcome and give my support to these proposals in this Bill."

#### A Referendum?

Mr. G. THORNE: "I believe that men and women ought to be made as keenly interested as it is possible to make them in the welfare of this country, and to secure that in the first place they must have the vote."

Mr. ARNOLD WARD: "May I read to the House a resolution which was unanimously adopted to-day at a meeting of the executive committee of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage? It was attended by many of the leading women who represent those great masses of their fellow-countrywomen who do not desire the vote:—

"The executive committee of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, whilst strongly opposing the

women suffrage clauses of the Representation of the People Bill, is of opinion that these clauses may be amended so as to afford a democratic settlement of the controversy if provisions are incorporated in them which suspend their operation until they have been submitted to and confirmed by the country, after a Referendum taken after the end of the war."

I suggest to the Home Secretary that he might perhaps use his good offices, in consultation both with suffragists and ourselves, to examine the suggestion of a Referendum and consider what form that Referendum might take. If Clauses 4 and 7 pass unamended you place the bulk of the women's suffrage party in this position, in which they must regard the whole of the rest of the Bill, every clause of it and every line of it, as one great vulnerable target, by every legitimate and Parliamentary means to be torpedoed and destroyed. . . . And the evil will not cease with the passing of the Bill, because for years suspicion and resentment must dog the footsteps of the enfranchised women, and in the years to come, whenever any unpopular measure or thing is passed or done, it may be traced to the influence of the female voters, and men's minds must recur with indignation and wrath to the circumstances of their enfranchisement."

#### No Recantation from Woman Suffrage.

Mr. WALTER LONG, summing up the debate on behalf of the Government, in an able and conciliatory speech, said: "This debate has been remarkable for many things, but amongst others for this—that many Hon. Members, headed by far the most distinguished of all, the Leader of the Opposition, have not been ashamed to say that they have changed their views and are prepared to accept a measure for the enfranchisement of women. At the same time, may I point out that not one single man in the House who in the old days advocated the enfranchisement of women has stated that he has been obliged to change his views or transfer his vote. Consequently, I am not prepared on the question of women's suffrage to promise any favourable consideration for the suggestion which the Hon. Member has made. [Mr. Arnold Ward, for a Referendum.]

The division against the amendment to proceed no further, and therefore in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill, showed 329; for the amendment, 40; majority, 289.

The voting in favour of Mr. Asquith's resolution on March 23 that the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference should be embodied in a Bill was: For, 341; against, 62; majority, 279.

#### Messages from our Branches.

The Branches of the Women's Freedom League are passing resolutions urging the local Members for the constituencies to ensure by their votes the passing of the Woman Suffrage Clause, and to the Prime Minister urging him to make the Woman Suffrage Clause an integral part of the Bill for which the Government will accept full responsibility and defend in all its stages.

#### Manchester Men's Message

At the annual meeting of the Manchester Men's League for Women Suffrage, on May 24, the following resolutions were passed:—"This meeting declares that in the best interests of the nation it is incumbent upon Parliament to seize the present opportunity of doing a long-delayed act of justice by admitting women to the Parliamentary franchise, and urges every Member of Parliament to support the Bill now before the House, as a step towards ultimate sex equality." "This League demands that when the clauses enfranchising women in the Representation of the People Bill pass the House of Commons, the Government shall adopt these clauses as an integral part of the Bill, and press the same through all its stages."

#### A Government Bill Promised in Canada.

The Canadian Premier, Sir Robert Borden, has announced that before the Government goes to the country he will introduce a measure of women's suffrage for the whole of the Dominion. When making this statement in the Canadian House of Commons, Sir Robert Borden said: "In English-speaking countries and communities of this Empire which enjoy democratic institutions, I believe there is an irresistible tendency to give the womanhood of the Empire the right to have an adequate voice in government, and I believe that the tendency will act with increasing force until all women of the Empire have the right to vote in the selection of those who are to represent them in the Parliaments of the nation and the Empire."

#### OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

Speaking from the chair on May 23, Mrs. Despard welcomed the fact that a Reform Bill, including women, was before Parliament; she pointed out that when, fifty years ago, John Stuart Mill moved an amendment in favour of women 74 voted against; she hoped the opponents of the present Bill would be fewer in number. It did not give all we asked, but would be accepted as an instalment. The Rev. Major Scott, speaking as a champion for many years of equality for men and women in politics and in the pulpit, protested against the stupid age limit for women of the Bill, but prophesied that a short experience of the woman's vote would prove the justice of "on the same terms as men." In a thoughtful and telling address on "The Upward Thrust," he declared that the woman's movement consists of idealists, of women and men who believe that realities can only be interpreted by a sense of ideals, so that the movement was destined to be a prime factor in the spiritual evolution of the race. The hope for the future lies in the association of working men and women in the solution of pressing problems. The House of Commons must have adequate representation of their needs, desires and ideals. Women must be there, he insisted, women who knew the strain and stress of life. The first problem to be dealt with should be race degeneration and regeneration; on this vital question women must be heard; men cannot be allowed to muddle on in legislating without them. Bound up with this were sex problems, and Mr. Scott spoke emphatically upon the need for abolishing the double stand of morality and establishing an equal code of honour. "What is morally wrong for women is morally wrong for men."

#### BRANCH NOTES.

##### Clapham.

The annual meeting of the branch was held on May 17, at 15, Clapham Mansions. The Secretary reported on the many and varied activities of the Branch during 1916. The Branch has helped headquarters considerably by sending goods to the Fancy Fair, held in November last, and by supplying stewards for the Fair, meetings, etc. The treasurer reported that financially the year had been a good one, the books showing a membership of 35, and a turnover of £73, £10 of this having been sent by the Branch to headquarters. Both reports were adopted with thanks. Miss Wearne and Miss Lawrence consented to continue as joint secretaries. Mrs. Corner expressed a wish to resign the treasurership, and proposed Mrs. Chalkley, who kindly consented to act in that capacity. The meeting was followed by the Branch meeting. Arrangements were made for holding open-air meetings on the Common, and the question of raising subscriptions for the Birthday Fund was discussed. Those present promised to try their utmost to secure a good sum.

##### Clydebank.

Miss McIntyre and Miss Eunice Murray were the speakers at a successful meeting, and the large crowd listened with keen interest. Both speakers expressed the hope that women would soon be in Parliament. Literature and THE VOTE sold well.

##### Croydon Office, 52a, The Arcade, High Street.

A very successful drawing-room meeting was held in Addiscombe, by the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Smerdon, on May 16. Mrs. Ackroyd spoke on the "offending" clauses of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, giving much information on the subject, especially her recent experiences as a Poor-law Guardian. Mrs. Terry presided, and pointed out a few hopeful signs, such as the Local Conference on Venereal Diseases, convened by the Municipal authorities, the lectures arranged on the same subject, the increased facilities for treating the diseases, and the general waking up of people and their desire to know and understand. On May 25 the first Sewing Party met and started their work for the Green, Gold and White Fair in November. As there will be a drawing-room meeting in Sanderstead on June 6, there will be no meeting at the office on the second Friday in June. Invitations for the Sanderstead drawing-room meeting can be obtained from the hon. secretary. The subject of Miss Abadam's address will be "Our Solidarity: if one Woman Suffer an Injustice, All Suffer with Her."

##### Dumbarton.

A good meeting was held in Dumbarton, at which Miss McIntyre and Miss Eunice Murray were the speakers. A resolution was passed calling upon the Government to enfranchise women as soon as possible. "The day for man's rule is over," said a listener. "And a good thing, too!" replied another. "The women couldn't do worse than the men," seemed the general verdict. THE VOTE and many suffrage pamphlets were sold, and a good collection taken.

##### Dundee.

The annual business meeting was held in the Steeple Club on May 24, at which Miss Husband presided. The resignation of Mrs. Mitchell, hon. secretary, was received with

much regret, and it was agreed to minute the members' hearty appreciation of Mrs. Mitchell's services to the Branch. Miss L. Chunnas was appointed hon. secretary for the ensuing year. Correspondence was read and dealt with, and a work-party started to produce articles for sale at the forthcoming Fair in London. Some discussion took place on the chances of success for the woman suffrage clause in the Representation of the People Bill. It was decided to write to the Members of Parliament for Dundee, Forfarshire, Montrose Burghs, and Perth, urging them to support this clause. It was suggested that open-air meetings should be held in June if the services of an organiser could be obtained. Votes of thanks concluded the meeting.

##### Edinburgh Suffrage Shop, 13, Charlotte-street.

The opening of our new premises at above address will take place on Wednesday, June 6, at 7.30 p.m. Tea will be served, and short addresses delivered by Miss Eunice Murray, Miss Sarah Munro, and Miss Belle H. McLelland. Members are asked to come in good numbers and to bring others. Every Wednesday during June bright meetings will be held at the same hour. Please take advantage of the summer evenings. Too soon the darkening restrictions will again shut you in. The Branch funds were considerably augmented by the recent Jumble Sale, which proved most successful in spite of the adverse conditions, and now you are asked to remember that the Sale of Work is only postponed, and that you should be devoting some money, some time, and much energy to the preparation of useful articles for a Sale at no very distant date.

A tremendously successful mass meeting was held at the Mound on May 22, in support of the inclusion of women in the Reform Bill. Thanks to Miss Jack, the following societies joined the Women's Freedom League in this demonstration:—The National Union, the Church League, the Scottish Churches League, and the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association. The speakers were Miss Eunice Murray, Miss Lumsden, LL.D., Mr. Rutherford Hill, Mr. J. Fraser Cunningham and Miss S. E. S. Mair (in the chair). A resolution was carried unanimously, and copies sent to certain Members of Parliament in time for the next day's debate. Among the banners displayed the name of our League stood out conspicuously on Miss Murray's latest gift to the Branch. THE VOTE sold well. Miss McLelland will be glad to have offers of help for open-air work in June.

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

A business meeting was held in the Suffrage Rooms on May 21. Mrs. Coates presided. The finance report was read by Mrs. Stores, hon. treasurer, and new officers were elected as follows: Mrs. McBean, hon. secretary (*pro tem*), Miss A. Nettleton, VOTE secretary. It was also decided to have a jumble sale to raise funds on June 11 (members please note), and Miss B. Nettleton was elected to take charge. Middlesbrough suffragists may congratulate themselves on Lieut. Watson's statement in the House on Tuesday that he had a mandate to support the Representation of the People Bill, that he would have the grille removed from the ladies' gallery and welcome women as Members of the House. The W.F.L. campaign at Stockton-on-Tees can be seen to have had a direct effect, and to have made woman suffrage one of the practical questions raised at the election.

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# THE VOTE

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PENNY  
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

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The articles enumerated below can be seen at "The Vote" Office, 10 to 5 daily, 10 to 12 Saturdays.

**LARGE SIZE COOKING STOVE;** twin steel ovens, enamelled throughout, 6-top burners, and grill; by Gill, of London; price £7 10s.

**PAIR SOROSIS TAN LACE BOOTS,** size 4½; 9s. 6d., cost 18s.

**LIBERTY ART PEWTER TEA and COFFEE SET,** with tray; £5 15s., or would be sold separately.—Mrs. S., c/o "THE VOTE" Office.

**SUPERIOR QUALITY NAVY GABARDINE COAT FROCK,** made by Debenham and Freebody; condition as new; £3 15s.

**ROSE PINK LINEN COSTUME;** medium size; coat lined silk, narrow skirt; 8s. 6d.

**INDIAN DELHI-CARVED SOLID IVORY BULLOCK-CART,** with drivers and attendants; 12in. long, 7in. high; exquisite and perfect; £15 or offers.

**FOUR YARDS MAUVE** (in two pieces) superior quality **CASHMERE DE SOIR;** 7s. 11d. per yard, cost 12s. 11d.

**ORIENTAL DESIGN PINK and YELLOW VELVET PORTIERE** or **SOFA COVER,** 2½ by 1½ yards; £2 2s.

**NAVY BLUE COSTUME;** worn once; large size; £2 15s.

**OPTIMUS COPYING PRESS,** in good order. Foolscap size. 8s. 6d.—Box 7, "THE VOTE" Office.

**NAVY BLUE SERGE COSTUME DRESS LENGTH;** 7s. 11d. yard.

**PAIR COURT WALKING SHOES;** glacé, with patent toecaps, size 6½, 13s. 9d.; ditto, size 4½, 12s. 9d.

**BLUE and WHITE STRIPED SILK SCARF;** 26in. wide, 2½ yards long; new, 8s. 6d.

**NEW WHITE CREPE DE CHINE DRESS;** 29s. 6d.

**QUEEN ANNE PATTERN PLATED TEA and COFFEE SERVICE;** £2 2s.

**NAVY GABARDINE COSTUME,** tailor-made; fit and suit stout lady; worn twice, £2 10s.

**GREY ALPACA DUST COAT;** small lady; 5s. 6d.

**DRESS LENGTH, BLACK CHARMEUSE;** splendid quality; 8s. 6d. yard.

## FOR SALE—cont.

**FOR SALE, GEYSER,** lin. "No. 2 Rapid," with locking gear, by Righton; in first-rate condition; £5. Also some **ELECTRIC FITTINGS,** including one 3-light pendant, small hall pendant, and several glass shades, etc.—Apply, H. L. Stow, 55, Cawley-road, South Hackney, E. 9.

**LARGE SIZE PINK SILK KIMONO BLOUSE,** 11s. 6d.; ditto **CREAM CREPE DE CHINE,** with small turn-down collar, 16s. 6d.

**WHITE ERMINE NECKLET;** thread through; £1 1s.; clean and newly lined.

**LARGE SIZE CREAM LACE and NET BLOUSE;** 30s.

**PAIR of new BLACK GLACE WALKING SHOES;** size 5 (4 fitting); 17s. 6d.

**PINK SATIN and LACE EVENING DRESS.** Full skirt. Excellent condition. Medium size; 30s.—Miss A., c/o "THE VOTE" Office.

**FIVE YARDS PALE PARMA VIOLET CORDED SILK;** double width; £1 4s. 6d.

**BLACK SILK CREPE** (9 yards); 46in. wide; 9s. 11d. per yard; would be cut.

**NEW, STOCK SIZE WHITE VOILE DRESSES;** entirely hand-worked; tucks and embroidery; ornamental silk buttons.

**GIRL'S DRESS;** long bodice, white silk with bright navy stripe; plain navy collar and cuffs and band at top of skirt; 12s. 6d.; age 9-11.

**NAVY BLUE SERGE COSTUME LENGTH** (5 yards); new; cost 10s. 11d.; now 7s. 11d. per yard.

**KNITTING MACHINE** (Harrison's Flat), 13-guinea model, in perfect order; knits socks, vests, coats, &c.; with all accessories and half-guinea instruction book, £7, or part exchange. Seen by appointment.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

**ATHEENIC UNDERWEAR** is made from best materials, is comfortable, durable and guaranteed unshrinkable.—Write for free book, with patterns, and buy direct from makers, Dept. 30, Atheenic Mills, Hawick Scotland.

**THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE** will hold Public Meetings at the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, every Wednesday afternoon, at 3.30 o'clock. June 6, Miss Margaret Hodge, "The Russian Revolution, or the Evolution of Democracy Under a Despotism." Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café (6d.).

## MISCELLANEOUS—cont.

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

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**LADY HELP** Required; comfortable home; knowledge of cooking essential.—Mrs. OWEN, 20, Blenheim-gardens, Cricklewood, N.W. 2.

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