

National Council of Women.

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OFFICIAL POLICEWOMEN.

The consistent policy of **The National Council of Women** has been to secure Official Policewomen, by having **women included in the scope of the Police Acts** for every purpose.

This has actually been accomplished. But, while **no further legislation is needed** to secure the position of women, strong pressure of educated public opinion is needed **to ensure the application of the Police Acts to policewomen.**

HISTORY OF POLICEWOMEN UP TO 1922.

Origin. In September 1914, the National Council of Women was authorised by the Government to organise **Voluntary Women Patrols**, working under the authorisation and approval of the Police Authorities of the area. All over the country hundreds of Voluntary Women Patrols gave their part time services in the interests of order and decency, and the care of women and girls. **Their successful work led directly to the demand for official policewomen** to carry on and to expand a task of which women had proved themselves capable.

Growth. The next step was to make a Voluntary Patrol into a **Full Time Paid Official Patrol**. There were **two difficulties**: (1) **Finance**. (2) **Legality**. But (1) in 1916, under D.O.R.A. a Police Act **enabled the PAY of whole time Policewomen** in England and Wales **to become chargeable to the Police Fund**, and (2) **The question of legality** after being variously interpreted by different Police Authorities, was **definitely settled** by the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919.

In 1916, therefore, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police appointed 30 of the Voluntary Women Patrols as paid whole time patrols, auxiliary to the Police, in Hyde Park and other parts of London. In the Report for 1917 of H.M. Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales, Provincial Policewomen are mentioned in several large cities, and in 1918 there came into being the **First Force of Official Policewomen** of the **Metropolitan Police Women Patrols** with an authorised strength of 1 Superintendent (Mrs. Stanley), 1 Assistant Superintendent, 10 Sergeants and 100 Women Patrols.

Standardisation. Though "policewomen" were being employed in many areas, the practice of the Police Authorities as to duties, pay, con-

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ditions and training in different districts varied greatly. A Committee under Major Baird was set up by the Home Office in 1920 to report on the **need of Women in the Police Employment**, on their duties, and conditions of service. "Not only scope, but urgent need for Policewomen" was the unanimous finding of the Baird Committee in 1921; to co-ordinate their work, a **Woman Assistant Inspector of Constabulary** should be appointed. **Standardisation of pay and conditions of service** was also recommended. The Home Office circularised all Police Authorities on the Report.

In the Police (Pensions) Act of 1921, for the first time in legislation, "Policewomen" are specifically mentioned.

TRAINING SCHOOLS.

Bristol inaugurated the first training-school for policewomen with Miss D. O. G. Peto, O.B.E., as director.

In **Scotland** through the far-sighted policy of the **National Vigilance Association (Scotland)** Miss Millar was attached to the Glasgow Police Force to take statements in cases of sexual crime in 1915. From 1918-1920 the **Scottish Training School for Policewomen** operated in **Glasgow**, under Miss Tancred. Facilities for Training were given by the Corporation of Glasgow, and the Training School became the centre of vigorous educative propaganda work in Scotland.

Liverpool also started a Training School under Miss Cowlin which still continues as the **Liverpool Women Police Patrols**. The three Training Schools formed a **Federation** for propaganda work from 1918 to 1921, receiving a generous grant from the Carnegie Trustees.

In 1921 the Training Schools in Bristol and Glasgow were closed in accordance with the recommendation of the Baird Committee, 1920, that **Chief Constables would select and train their own policewomen**.

In August 1919, the preliminary **question of Finance** was settled by the Scottish Office Circular (1485) which allowed **claims on the Police Grant** for the pay and clothing of **full time policewomen in Scotland**.

As in England, the question of the **legality of attesting women in the police force** was settled by the Act of December, 1919. Edinburgh, therefore, in that year appointed a policewoman: Glasgow sanctioned the appointment of ten policewomen.

1922 AND AFTER.

The need for policewomen and their usefulness in the performance of those duties for which they were specially suited had been fully proved. In June 1921, the **Home Secretary said**: "If **Women Police** are employed they **must be employed properly**. With regard to the Metropolitan Police **the few women police we have are exceedingly valuable**."

All over the country public opinion was growing, so that when, in February 1922, the **Committee on National Expenditure** ("Geddes Axe") proposed to abolish the force of Metropolitan Police Patrols in the name of "Economy," a widespread protest was made. Women's Societies of

all kinds took action, and Parliament, **convinced of the unexpected strength and sincerity of the demand for policewomen, reversed the decision**, although the number was largely reduced.

The controversy of 1922 left authorities in some uncertainty, and in 1924 a **second Committee**, representative of every party and of the Police authorities, with Mr. Bridgman as Chairman, was appointed "to review the experience now available in regard to the employment of Women Police in England and Wales and to make recommendations as to their future organisation and duties." It reported that "**the efficiency of the Police Service has been improved by the employment of Policewomen**," and that statements of women and children in sexual cases should be taken by policewomen. **Policewomen should**, as an integral part of the force, **make the declaration** of a constable, the Baird Committee's rates of pay and pension should be adopted, and again the appointment of a **Woman Assistant-Inspector of Constabulary** was recommended. The report was sent by the Home Office to all Police Authorities in England and Wales. This important pronouncement of policy was followed in 1926 by a deputation representative of all the chief Women's Societies, organised by the **N.C.W.** to the Home Office, where the Secretary for Scotland also attended. The Home Secretary promised to send out a circular, pointing out how few policewomen had as yet been appointed, in spite of "**their undoubted success**," and to give an example by adding to the number of Metropolitan Policewomen who are under the immediate Control of the H.O. Circulars, therefore, were issued in 1927 by **both the Home Office and the Scottish Office**, drawing attention to the question of **Numbers**.

A further Scottish Office Circular (No. 2170), issued in 1927, touches on the question of **Duties**. Reviewing the Report of the Departmental Committee on Sexual offences against children and young persons in Scotland, attention is directed to the recommendation that **in order to have policewomen to take precognitions in such cases**, and to give "other suitable duties to occupy their time more fully," "**the experiment might be made in some of the larger Burghs, as well as in Glasgow, of employing uniformed policewomen to make a systematic patrol of parks and open spaces frequented by children**." The Secretary for State reminds Police Authorities that he has already requested them on general grounds "to consider the question of appointing policewomen where circumstances justify that course," and that "the result may be that a **greater number of policewomen than at present will be available for the duties referred to**."

Meanwhile, the **list of Duties** suitable for Policewomen, which was drawn up by the **Chief Constable of Glasgow**, has been printed by the **League of Nations** (Report on Employment of Women in the Police) as a standard. It includes enquiring into Sexual Offences in all cases involving Women and Children: taking precognitions; making observation and enquiries; patrolling streets and open spaces; attending at High Court; escorting female prisoners; reporting children found badly cared for or cruelly treated or in immoral surroundings.

The **Report of the Street Offences Committee**, 1928, recognises "a **special sphere of usefulness for Women Police**" in dealing with offences

against the law in connection with prostitution and the maintenance of decency and good order in streets and public places.

The Report of the Royal Commission, 1929, on Police Powers and Procedure devotes chapter ix. to a survey of the question of Women Police and sums up as follows:—"We are satisfied, from the evidence laid before us, that **the time is ripe for a substantial increase in their numbers.**"

Recent deputations (March and April, 1929) from influential women's organisations have received assurances of their appreciation of Women Police from **the leaders of the three political parties in the House of Commons**—Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Lloyd George—Mr. Baldwin intimated a "**substantial increase**" of the Metropolitan policewomen.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

Women, then, are within the Police Acts for all purposes. **Two Committees of Enquiry and a Royal Commission** have declared that **Policewomen are urgently needed in all large centres and their employment has increased the efficiency of the force.** **The Home Office and the Scottish Office** have said that they are so much in favour of the movement that the deputation of 1926 was "**pushing an open door.**" They have made recommendations as to pay and pension: the Secretary of State for Scotland has made **specific suggestions** as to Duties to "**the larger burghs.**"

AND YET.

In England and Wales, including London	there are	56,700 Policemen.
		147 policewomen.
In Scotland	there are	6,530 policemen.
		16 policewomen

Many "**large centres**" and many "**larger burghs**" have **no police-women at all.**

No Regulations have been made as to the Duties of Policewomen.

WHAT IS STILL NEEDED.

1. **Education of Public Opinion** in every large city so that the citizens may secure a sufficient body of Policewomen, used for those duties which are specially suitable for them.
2. The adoption by **ALL the Police Authorities** of those model duties for women, which have been proved successful by several large cities.
3. The issue of **Statutory Regulations for Women**, on the lines of the 1919 Police Act for Men, in order to standardise conditions and to secure the best recruits.
4. The appointment of a Woman Assistant Inspector of Constabulary.

EVERY CITIZEN SHOULD TAKE A PART IN PUSHING THE DOOR WIDE OPEN.

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