

THE VOTE,  
AUGUST 16, 1918.  
ONE PENNY.

# Keep On "Tirading."

MARGARET WYNNE NEVINSON.

# THE VOTE

## THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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**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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### WOMEN M.P.s: A MEMBER'S VIEW.

By H. G. Chancellor, M.P.

The aim of law is justice. The purpose of legislation is the embodiment of justice in laws. Justice demands the equality before the law of all persons coming under it. But that equality is only attainable when all who have to obey have a share in the making of the laws.

When Magna Charta abolished autocracy the law-making power passed to the Church, Barons, etc. When Parliament came into existence it was shared by a limited number of others, all employers. Hence the Statutes of Labourers and Act for Burning Heretics. When the Act of 1430 confined voters to the 40s. freeholders, the power passed exclusively into the hands of the land-owning class for 400 years. Hence land enclosures and a whole series of laws that in time turned Merrie England into the hideous horror of the industrial system and reduced the landless masses to a state of practical slavery worse than the serfdom of the Middle Ages. The enfranchisement of 1832, bringing in the trading classes, brought free trade and a gradual amelioration of industrial conditions, that of 1867 the system of popular education, and that of 1884 social legislation, which, bad as things are to-day, yet makes them vastly better than they were before that date.

The Representation of the People Act of this year, bringing in simple residents and women over thirty,

has brought within the sphere of practical politics—*i.e.*, has rendered imminent as projects of law—many subjects that without it could not have ripened for years. Among these are matters specially affecting women with which the new Parliament will be forced to deal. No reconstruction proposals can now leave women out of account.

These matters can only be settled if settled right. Can they be so settled by a Parliament from which women are excluded? I am assuming that as voters women can influence legislation by returning men pledged to deal with subjects which specially affect them, *e.g.*, marriage, motherhood, guardianship of children, education, sex relations, etc. I also assume a Parliament desirous of doing the right thing, and of establishing equal justice before the law for both sexes. *Can*, not will, they do it? Goodwill is not enough to produce good legislation or even good administration. Results the most unexpected and entirely unintended and unforeseen often arise, and judges make hay of good intentions put into Acts of Parliament when they come to interpret them. The most essential of all qualifications for a legislator, apart from the mere desire to do right, is understanding, and this can only come from experience. But no man can have the woman's experience, or realise how his well-

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intentioned proposals will affect them. Even sympathetic imagination, with which some—not many—men are gifted, cannot take its place.

#### The Only Way.

I recall a meeting many years ago of the Islington Borough Council. A proposal was under discussion to build underground lavatories for men. It seemed to the members to meet the case until Mrs. Richardson, the only woman member, in a short speech full of delicacy and in perfect taste, explained the injury to the health of women and the avoidable suffering they sometimes underwent owing to the absence of such conveniences. She won her case, and provision was made for both sexes, one of whom might otherwise have been overlooked, not from lack of goodwill, but from lack of woman's knowledge and experience.

Last year I served on the Grand Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which, after weeks of discussion and amendment, was dropped on the report stage, and is to be revived in another form if so recommended by the Committee just set up to consider the two Bills of the Lords, the new Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill. Readers of THE VOTE are familiar with the contents of these Bills. They contain clauses most unjust and most unequal in their bearing on the two sexes. Every woman's organisation I know is against them. Their professed object is not the persecution of women, but the protection of public health. I am convinced that the promoters do not desire injustice for women, but they do not know or understand what they are doing. They cannot know or understand. Only women with vote and voice on the Committee itself could make them understand, just as only women with vote and voice in Parliament could convince the House of their iniquity and eliminate their dangers. Outside pressure may do something; but debate and divisions in which women took part would almost certainly defeat the Bills or eliminate their injustices. The presence of women on the floor would prevent things being said which their presence in the Gallery does not.

#### Now is the Time.

I am driven to the conclusion, therefore, that legislation made by men for women must inevitably be unequal and unjust. Women's influence as voters may do much, but it cannot make men understand. Only the power of co-operation in actual debate and legislation can do that. Law officers notwithstanding, membership of the House of Commons must be opened to women, as is membership of local governing bodies. The insight and efficiency which they have brought to bear on the work of Guardians, Education Committees, etc., is even more needed in the making of the laws which these bodies interpret and administer. Only with their help can the justice and equality which Parliament exists to establish come about, because only so can the experience of all who come under the law be made available in its making.

This is true not only of subjects specially affecting women. Few indeed are the questions in which both sexes are not equally interested, and in which women's special point of view does not need taking into account if legislation is to effect its purpose. From housing to foreign relations, from trade unionism to University education, and now from nursing to engineering, problems of reconstruction will be solved or bungled according as men and women take counsel together, both before and in the actual making and administering of the laws which reconstruction will call forth. Now, therefore, is the time to overhaul the lawmaking machinery. By making personality, not sex, the qualification for membership of the Legislative machine, it will be enabled effectively to do what with sex exclusion it cannot do, that is, legislate with understanding, and thus solve problems instead of creating them.

## Women's Freedom League.

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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

#### LONDON AND SUBURBS.

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Saturday, September 21.—Bowes

Park Branch. Drawing-room Meeting,

121, Bowes Road, Palmer's Green, N.,

3.30 p.m.

Saturday, September 28.—London

Branches Council. Debate 3 p.m.,

Minerva Café. Opener, Mrs. How-Martyn. Subject:

"That it is in the National Interests that Women should be

Members of the next Parliament."

Wednesday, October 9.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café,

3 p.m. Mrs. Hall Simpson on "How Women of India and

England can Co-operate."

Sunday, October 20.—Herne Hill Branch. Drawing-room

Meeting at 69, Danecroft-road, 4 p.m. Speaker: Mrs.

Despard on "Women and the Future."



DAKE TO  
BE FREE.

The Minerva Dressmaking and Exchange Department will be closed until Monday, September 2.

### OUR POINT OF VIEW.

#### Is it Good-bye?

Parliament adjourned late in the evening of August 8 for a ten weeks' holiday, that is, until October 15. Will the present House of Commons meet again except to dissolve? To this question, which is agitating the minds of politicians, Mr. Bonar Law, the leader of the House, replied: "I cannot give an undertaking that we shall all meet again." Whether the General Election comes during the recess or in November, or early next year, or even in April, 1919, as some wiseacres suggest, it is in the power of the Prime Minister to choose the time at which to advise the King to dissolve Parliament. He will, of course, choose the moment which seems most favourable for his chances of success at the polls and return to power. The new register is so far completed that claims against omissions are being heard, and should be disposed of within the next few weeks. That done the way is clear.

#### Women as M.P.s.

The Women's Freedom League and the Prime Minister agree! Our solution of the difficulty as to whether women are eligible to sit in Parliament, despite the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, is a short Bill declaring that in Acts of Parliament, and in customary or common law, words importing the masculine gender shall be taken to include women. This has been widely quoted in the Press. We understand that Mr. Lloyd George is in favour of this plan of action, and in view of the opinion of Ministers and Members that the legal decision cannot stand after the enfranchisement of women, we look to speedy action to clear the way for women candidates at the General Election. No political party can afford to antagonise its women, and the Coalition is not anxious to let Labour—which is entirely favourable to women members of Parliament, and is willing to introduce legislation to ensure their eligibility—"corner" women voters.

When men have wanted the service of women in unusual ways there has been no trouble about common law and special statutes to legalise it. The men whose monopoly is threatened by the inevitable coming of the woman M.P. cannot be allowed to bolt and bar the door in her face.

#### A Word to "Distinguished Strangers."

Men and women, without distinction of sex, are to occupy the Strangers' Gallery in the Gilded Chamber. The House of Lords thus leads the way to equality, and it is expected that the House of Commons will speedily follow. Mr. Bonar Law has intimated readiness to do so. We cannot forbear a word of sympathy with the Distinguished Strangers who may be relegated to the discomforts of the Ladies' Gallery. They are not yet aware of the impossibility of seeing or hearing except in the front row of seats, and we warn them of the lurking danger of leaning heavily on the iron bars separating the rows. In their eagerness to see and hear they may easily overbalance, and, now that the grille has been removed, find themselves making a swift and undignified descent on to the floor of the House by canning off the Press Gallery, the Speaker's Chair, and the Mace!

#### Women and Ladies.

A short time ago a woman named Gerster, the British wife of an interned German, attempted to earn her living, in spite of the noisy hooligans who used to howl at suffrage meetings, by going out to work under her maiden name of Harris. For this crime she was hailed before the magistrates, who adjourned the case, making sure that the Home Secretary would, in the circumstances, give to this helpless Englishwoman special permission to secure as Mrs. Harris that blessing of employment which was denied to her as Mrs. Gerster. The Home Office, however, considers this quite improper, and curtly refuses; so Mrs. Gerster has been convicted and fined; she is not allowed to earn money, but the State is to take some from her if it can get it! Yet we know that any lady of title retains her title on marrying a second time unless she herself decides against it—witness Lady Randolph Churchill and Lady Jersey, the wives of Mr. Porch and Mr. Brandling respectively, and many others: again, the daughters of rich men keep their maiden name on marriage, Lady Burton, Lord Burton's married daughter, being one instance. But then these ladies have not to earn a living—which makes all the difference.

#### Mr. Muskett—Who Will Prosecute Him for Contempt of Court?

Mr. Muskett, who used to have such a good time in conducting the police cases against members of the Women's Freedom League and other suffragettes, has put his foot in it. He has conducted "about five cases" under 40 D, and in all of these medical evidence has rebutted the charge. Now he declares that these prosecutions are unsatisfactory; if he cannot win he will not play. Yet, as the Solicitor to the Commissioners of Police and a public servant, it is his business to uphold the Majesty of the Law. There was no evidence against the prisoners, therefore they are guiltless; let us therefore rejoice that out of "about five" potential criminals every single one turned out to be an innocent woman. But Mr. Muskett prefers to explain, public servant as he is, that when he cannot establish his case the prisoner still is guilty and the "law is a hass."

#### How the Magistrate Welcomed the Baby.

Another example of masculine justice in spite of the cry for "More Babies." At Richmond a few days ago a woman was fined 10s. for the irregular

attendance at school of one of her children. The police officer stated she had just given birth to her twentieth child. Yet no women are allowed on the Bench.

### THOUGHTS OF A WOMAN PREACHER.

A few weeks ago considerable interest was aroused by a notice which appeared in many of the daily papers that a thatched Wesleyan chapel had been burnt down at Rempstone, Dorset. The chapel was hardly more than a big room, adjoining a cottage, but it has been a centre of worship for sixty years for the dwellers upon Rempstone Heath, a wild, glorious spot situated between the Purbeck Hills and Poole Harbour. For miles round the people (many of whom have attended Bushey Church in the afternoon) come to the evening service. I have preached at the Thatched Chapel many times, my first visit being by moonlight one chilly November evening. Since that time, in all seasons and all weathers, I have tramped across the Heath to conduct the services.

The news of the fire came as a great blow, but the general feeling was that the devoted little congregation must not be allowed to disperse. On the following Sunday evening service was held in the open air, not far from the ruins, and friends walked over from Swanage to join with the Rempstone people, whose cheerfulness was truly good to see. When the preacher appealed for offerings towards the new chapel an enthusiastic lady rose from her seat on the ground, seized a gentleman's straw hat and took the collection, which amounted to about twenty-six shillings.

I meet many people who express sympathetic interest in women as preachers. There is a strong feeling that women are urgently needed to fill the depleted ranks of the men preachers. Speaking for my own denomination, I strongly urge all Methodist women who help in this important work not to be content to serve as stop-gaps, but to become "fully accredited local preachers" without delay. It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when all branches of the Church will receive women into their theological colleges to be trained as ministers, as the Congregationalists have already done, and are preparing to extend facilities.

Women are often accused of being narrow; but although it is not true in general, it may be of some women. Yet who stops to consider how cramped are women's surroundings, and how little chance they have of cultivating the spiritual and mental side of their nature, occupied as they are with the incessant monotony of domestic life? Only on rare occasions does one hear a prayer, full of real understanding, offered in any place of worship for women whose burdens are almost too heavy for them to bear. We welcome tributes to the splendid men who have answered their country's call to arms, but we hear very little about the toiling masses at home who are indispensable to the nation's life, scarcely a mention of the little children who are born into the world in these days of stress and strain. All great moral questions, and indeed all interests of life, must be viewed from the woman's as well as the man's standpoint. Therefore, in the pulpit, as well as in all other spheres of activity, man and woman must stand together if we are to secure a complete human ministry.

M. BALLARD DAWSON.

Miss Maude Royden preaches in the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, next Sunday, at the 6 p.m. service. Subject: "Poetry and Religion."

## THE VOTE.

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### KEEP ON "TIRADING!"

On August 8, as reported in the evening Press, a young girl was charged on remand at Lambeth under Regulation 40 D, having been arrested on information given by a Canadian soldier. A few days earlier another young woman, described as a chauffeur, was charged at the same court, and the case dismissed by Mr. Cecil Chapman, as there was no evidence that she was suffering from disease. In this case the unfortunate girl had a double dose of torture, from her own doctor and the prison official.

In the first case Mr. Muskett, prosecuting for the Commissioner of Police, said that he did not propose to proceed further with the case in view of the fact that an examination of the prisoner had given a negative result. Mr. Marpole, defending, protested that the liberty of the subject was at stake in these cases. Mr. Muskett, interrupting, said there was no need for his learned friend "to indulge in such a tirade." "The authorities," he added, "were doing their best to enforce this Regulation in the face of great difficulties. There was no hardship as far as this woman was concerned." (Italics ours.)

Mr. Muskett will find that many thousands of indignant women (and men) will join Mr. Marpole in his tirade against these outrages on the liberty of the subject and the holy spirit of man, as well as these filthy practises upon the body of a woman—that body which has been called "the temple of the Holy Ghost."

It is a stock argument by supporters of 40 D that innocent women can easily refute the charge, but they can only do that at the cost of a nameless insult to their modesty and an unforgettable humiliation to their personal dignity—which Mr. Muskett considers "no hardship." When Mr. Lees Smith asked later in the House of Commons that the consent of the woman to this examination should be in writing, Sir George Cave replied that "no doctor would examine a woman without her consent." Either by word or by writing most young women would probably not have an idea of the indignity to which they were consenting. If they refused, what would happen next? Would they be held guilty and consigned to prison as suspect and diseased persons, or would they be set free? Our rulers have not cleared these points to the mind of plain persons. With regard to the chivalry of doctors many suffragettes will probably "hae their doots." There was precious little chivalry among the prison doctors about forcible feeding, though it was pointed out alike by the medical profession and the laity that forcible feeding without the consent of the fed ranked as assault with violence.

The Star of Friday, August 9, points out in a very sympathetic note that in old times, under the Contagious Diseases Acts, garrison towns were dangerous for women; but now that the British Isles are one

great garrison no woman is safe anywhere. "It is not even necessary for the police to make a mistake; any man of bad principle with a grudge against a woman may accuse her." What a gorgeous opportunity for the jealous lover, frenzied with thwarted passion, the rejected suitor, the scoundrel, and the blackmailer!

Under the great and humane precepts of our old English law every prisoner was held innocent till proved guilty; now in the twentieth century, with an emancipated womanhood (over 30), women (not men) are held guilty till they can prove themselves innocent, and that at a cost to which prison, nay, for many modest young girls (we speak advisedly), even death itself would be almost preferable. There is on record, we understand, a case of a woman who committed suicide after this medical examination, which, we quote Mr. Muskett again, inflicts "no hardship." We note, too, that in both cases the names of these "malefactors," both proved innocent and discharged, are given in full with address and occupation; the names of the soldiers who informed against and maligned them are not disclosed. Even when discharged an indelible stain will rest on the characters of these women; they may lose their work and be forced into the ranks of prostitutes. Is it likely that a soldier would suffer in character, career, or purse? Mr. Bonar Law stated just before Parliament rose that 40 D had been reconsidered by a Committee of the Cabinet, who have decided that for the present, in the interests of the health of our soldiers and those of the Dominions, the Regulation must be maintained.

Veneral disease is always one of the evil sequels of war. The unnatural conditions, the general loosening of ties and morality, the emotional tension and revival of the eucirean doctrine, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," all tend to sexual excitement and the opening of the flood-gates of vice.

The Government is puzzled and wrestling futilely with great moral problems in an effort to cure one of the inevitable effects of war. "Something must be done!" is the panic cry. After giving us 40 D the attempt is being made to rattle a Government Bill through Parliament; and unless a strong fight is waged against it a hotch-potch of the old discredited Contagious Diseases Acts, long since thrown out and done with by the courageous and devoted work of Mrs. Josephine Butler and her associates, will stain the fair name of Britain. Vice will be rampant, and men, lulled into false security with so-called "clean" women licensed by the State for their lust, will feel justified in their plea of "the necessity of sexual indulgence." We ask, with Mr. Pringle and Mr. Chancellor, "if this is part of the policy of social reconstruction for the general election," and "if this provision for lust is one of the ideals for which we are fighting?" Meantime we remember the failure of State-controlled vice to stop disease in other countries.

In 1883, at a time of Victorian prudery and false modesty, a handful of earnest and devoted women, aided by a few righteous men, were able to bring about a great victory against the Powers of Darkness. They wept and prayed together—great ladies in their splendid toilettes kneeling and weeping with their outcast sisters in their great need. We are told how a venerable American lady rose in her place and said: "Tears are good, prayers are better, but we should get on better still if behind every tear there was a vote in the ballot-box." We have that vote now. Let us not fall behind those brave women of thirty-five years ago in our energy and devotion. Let us not cease to indulge in those "tirades" condemned by Mr. Muskett, as long as women are "destroyed" by law of honour and modesty.

MARGARET WYNNE NEVINSON.

## THE DEPUTATION.

By G. Colmore.

Maisie looked up from the newspaper.  
"We must have a deputation," she said.  
"A deputation?" growled Uncle Sam. "What do you mean by a deputation?"  
"A political deputation, of course," said Maisie.  
Uncle Sam snorted. "Where? Whom to, pray?" he enquired.

"The Member, of course—at his house," said Maisie.  
Again Uncle Sam snorted, and this time with virulence. "Should have thought you'd have had about enough of deputations. I remember—" and the snort changed to a chuckle.  
"That," said Maisie before Uncle Sam could go on again, "was before the vote."  
"Vote!" cried Uncle Sam. "Much difference the vote'll make!"

"You seemed to think it would make a great difference before we got it," retorted Maisie.

"I thought it would make you more foolish than you were before; but as for anything else—any amount of votes can't make a woman into a man."

Maisie glanced reflectively at Uncle Sam; then she said softly: "Thank the Lord!"

Uncle Sam looked at her doubtfully; he was not quite sure whether this was a sudden access of piety or—but what else could it be?

"The Lord knew what He was about when He made men and women," he said solemnly, "and He isn't going to have any changing over, so don't you think it. You'll be kept in your place, the same as you were before, my good girl, vote or no vote, so don't go to think any different."

The good girl smiled. "We shall see," she said.  
"We shall see," affirmed Uncle Sam.

"We shall see," said Maisie, and went out of the room.

For a week she was very busy, writing letters, rushing in and out of the house, receiving visitors, making appointments. Uncle Sam, who looked on with mingled scorn and suspicion, thought it all very unseemly. She might have been so much better employed; he had brought with him some socks that wanted darning.

"What's all this carrying on and hurry and skurry about?" he enquired once, and Maisie answered him in two words only. "The deputation," she said, and smiled a smile which was irritating to Uncle Sam; and it was no good snorting, for she just smiled all the more.

One afternoon at the end of the week he found her sewing a lace collar into a rather nice frock. A gleam of hope sprang up within him.

"Hullo! got a young man?" he asked. It was so much easier to give wedding presents to women than political power. But Maisie's reply damped down his hope at once.

"Oh, dear no; it's for the deputation."  
"Is it coming off? Is he going to receive you?" he managed to gasp.

"Why, of course," said Maisie.  
"I suppose you think you're going to impress him by wearing smart clothes. Pack of nonsense," said Uncle Sam.

But Maisie only laughed. "Clothes," said she, "are for your kind of women. We depend upon the vote."

The next day the deputation took place. It started from Maisie's house, and if it had not been for its abominable nature, Uncle Sam would have enjoyed seeing the assembling of the members. They did not look political; on the contrary they gave the impression of being rather nice.

Maisie departed smiling; she returned quite grave—at least about the mouth. Uncle Sam, when he

first accosted her did not see her eyes, and it was from her mouth that he took his cue.

"Well, how did you get on?" he asked, prepared to follow her reply with a triumphant "I told you so." But Maisie's reply took half the vim out of his demeanour.

"Al," she said.  
"Did he see you?"  
"Of course," said Maisie; and then he saw her eyes, and the second half of the vim followed the first.

"And—and—" he stammered, then suddenly: "What are you giggling for, girl?"

"We got what we asked for, that's all," said Maisie. "But it does make one feel rather giggly considering that a year ago—"

"You got—? Well, I never!" said Uncle Sam.  
"Of course you never," said Maisie, "because you never in the old days understood the power of the vote."

### 40D—UNWORKABLE!

The results of the past months of the women's agitation against 40 D and its brother abominations are becoming more evident.

The tide of public indignation, first of the women of the country and then of the men, is rising steadily.

The 6,000,000 women voters, who seem to swell in the fears of politicians to an unnumbered multitude, must be considered.

It is growing more difficult to keep cases under 40 D out of the Press, and publicity is our surest friend as it is the direst foe of the supporters of State regulation of vice and of all who want to see the pernicious and exploded Contagious Diseases Acts at work again in our country.

### Prosecutions under 40 D.

All readers are particularly asked to forward cuttings from local papers of any of these cases they come across.

On August 8 Mr. JACOBSEN asked the Home Secretary if he would say how many women have been medically examined under Regulation 40 D of the Defence of the Realm Act, and of this number how many were found to be free from venereal disease?

SIR G. CAVE: I have no statistics on these points, but I will consult the Prison Commissioners as to whether a return can be obtained.

Meanwhile the War Office says there have been 100 convictions, which with Mr. Muskett's record of "about five" prosecutions to no convictions, and the results of the published cases, might mean 500 or more prosecutions.

### The Week's Haul—Six Cases, No Convictions at Lambeth Police Court

AN UNNAMED WOMAN, charged on remand under 40 D (August 1), after medical examination was acquitted.

VIOLET COLLINS, a motor driver, aged 22, charged on remand (August 3) with infecting a soldier, after medical examination by her own doctor, and by the assistant medical officer at Holloway Prison, was discharged. The police solicitor gave up the case, as there was no evidence at all that she was suffering from any venereal disease.

EDITH ODELL, aged 21, charged on remand (August 8), and arrested upon a warrant granted on a sworn information laid by a Canadian soldier, now under hospital treatment, that she had infected him, Mr. Muskett, prosecuting for the Commissioners of Police, lamented that he must give up the case, as medical examination of the prisoner had shown no disease.

MRS. OLIVE CALLAGHAN, aged 21, wife of a soldier on service, charged (August 9) on the strength of a sworn information of a Corporal of the Australian Forces, was remanded for medical examination by the prison doctor, to which she agreed, Mr. Muskett going out of his way to point out the Court's obligation to inform the prisoner of her "right" of examination.

### At Marylebone Police Court

ANOTHER UNNAMED WOMAN charged (August 8) under 40 D was discharged, medical evidence "unfortunately" declining to support Mr. Muskett in his prosecution.



FRIDAY,  
AUGUST 16,  
1918.

# THE VOTE

ONE  
PENNY  
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

## franchise to women we could not refuse their admission to this House.

SIR J. D. REES: May I ask whether the reasons of the decision can be communicated to the House?

MR. BONAR LAW: I cannot give the reasons for the decision until a decision has been arrived at.

SIR J. D. REES: I mean the reasons of the Law Officers' decision.

MR. BONAR LAW: I have seen their decision, and, as usual, they were wise enough not to give their reasons.

## STRANGERS' GALLERIES (Admission of Women)

COLONEL SIR JAMES CRAIG asked the Prime Minister whether he will give the House an opportunity of considering the question of opening the available galleries of this House to women and men impartially?

MR. BONAR LAW: If there is a general desire I should be glad to arrange an opportunity for this discussion after the recess.

## GENERAL ELECTION (SOLDIERS' VOTES)

MR. TREVELYAN asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, as it has been decided that, in the event of a General Election, the votes cast at home will not be counted before the arrival of the ballot papers marked by the soldiers who are away from home, the soldiers are to vote on an earlier date than the General Election, or whether all over the country several days are to elapse between the poll and the counting of the votes?

MR. S. WALSH: Section 23 (3) of the Representation of the People Act contemplates the postponement of the counting of the votes cast at home for a period not exceeding eight days after the close of the poll, so that the counting of all the votes, including the absent voters' votes, may take place at one and the same time.

[Absent voters include women on war service.]

## WOMEN M.P.s

### Press Pronouncements.

#### Westminster Gazette

It is only reasonable to conclude that Parliament, having taken the first step in the recognition of the women's demand for a share in government, will be bound ultimately to go the whole journey. Prejudice and the plea of tradition and custom will be of little avail to the opponents of this measure. In our view there is no reason for dismay even on the part of the timid. Certainly it is absurd to

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