

THE VOTE.
APRIL 30, 1926.

SPECIAL CONFERENCE NUMBER.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.
NON-PARTY.

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ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1926

OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the powers already obtained to elect women in Parliament, and upon other public bodies, for the purpose of establishing 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'S FREEDOM LEAGUE—NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, APRIL 24TH, 1926.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, BY MISS ANNA MUNRO.

DELEGATES AND FRIENDS,

I have very great pleasure in welcoming you on behalf of the National Executive Committee, who have been carrying on your work from headquarters for the past year. I would like to give an especial welcome to those new branches which are with us for the first time, and ask you to realise that the work of the Women's Freedom League in every detail is your work, and we hope to go on from victory to victory with the long years of experience which some of us have on our shoulders, and your fresh outlook and enthusiasm.

An Annual Conference is a time to look back as well as to plan for the future. In a survey of the past year the result is disappointing. It always is to those who hitch their wagon to a star, but a review of the quarter of a century we have just passed is a striking tribute to our efforts. It has witnessed the co-operation of women internationally and nationally on common grounds of service to humanity: the service of free and independent human beings, or, where any restrictions exist, demanding their abolition. Internationally as well as nationally we see the slow, gradual widening and ever widening of women's participation in Governments; and the signal honour the French people are paying the International Suffrage Congress next month will be followed, we hope, by that most desirable of practical results—the Parliamentary vote to our French sisters. The professions and trades too, if not actually welcoming women, because the old sex prejudice dies

hard, are at least beginning to accept them as a necessary and integral part of the everyday work of the world to-day. At home we are still suffering from the aftermath of war. Unemployment brings misery to the homes of many of our people, and industrial conditions in our vital industries cause sorrow, unrest, and unhappiness to a large number of our women and men.

Economy, nationally, has been directed against the babies in the slums of our great cities, our normal and defective children, and our unemployed women. Your Committee have protested at every opportunity against any reduction in education, housing, adequate police protection, which should include a large number of fully qualified women; any attempt to penalise married women, or any women from engaging in suitable work; and have demanded that, when the country honours its citizens, equal honour should be given to women as to men. During the year several Acts affecting women have been passed. The new Guardianship of Infants Act, while improving the mother's position does not give her complete equality. The Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Act alleviates somewhat the difficulties of the



MISS ANNA MUNRO.

unhappily married woman. The Administration of Estates Act, which came into operation this year, is a revolution in the position of women so far as intestacy is concerned. It abolishes the difference between real and personal estate, and makes no differences between sons and daughters, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, thus sweeping away one

of the most flagrant injustices to women in the past. I am sorry there is no similar Act on our Statute Book for Scotland. Much has been done, but much remains to be done.

Our primary object—the vote for women on the same terms as men—has still to be won. The proposal to deal with it by a Conference we are opposing with all the vigour we can muster, and this will be demonstrated by the procession to and gathering in Hyde Park on July 3rd. We hope you will make it even larger than any previous demonstration. The country not only requires the voice of its young women from 21, and the older women who are shut out owing to various anomalies, but the married woman, who now has the vote merely as an appendage to some man, would welcome a more individual basis.

Twelve years old is still the legal age of marriage for girls, and 16 the age of consent; the married woman is still assessed with her husband, her nationality is not her own decision; and widows' pensions notwithstanding, women and children in England can be left destitute, no matter what estate the husband may leave; women are still paid less than men in the teaching profession and the Civil Service, which reacts adversely on women in all branches of professional and industrial life.

Our women Members of Parliament only number four, but we would like to thank them, and especially our youngest Member, Miss Wilkinson, for their ready help and expression of our needs in Parliament. So no one can think for a moment that our work is done, or nearly so, and one continuous effort we can all make is to increase the circulation of our gallant little weekly paper, THE VOTE.

During my year of office I have been able to visit some of our Branches and attend an important Conference. I have been impressed by the re-awakened interest in our cause.

The reports before you are a wonderful record of hard, continuous, persevering labours in all directions, and unceasing vigilance where women and children are concerned. The reports are open for your criticism and discussion, and I trust also your appreciation, as we are particularly fortunate in our officials and in our office staff, who overcome the difficulties of inadequate funds by hard work and unbounded enthusiasm in the service of the League.

The result of your decisions to-day and your strenuous efforts during the coming year should clear away many of the liabilities under which we still suffer, but it can only be achieved by those—

“Who never turned their back, but marched breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better”;

and who—

“Greet the Unseen with a cheer.”

In conclusion, I would like to say what a very great pleasure my year as President has been, and to thank my fellow officials, National Executive Committee, and the staff for their loyal fellowship and help.

ANNA MUNRO.

A SWEDISH WOMAN PIONEER.

Ellen Key, the great Swedish woman authoress and pioneer, whose death is reported at the age of 75, has for many years past been looked upon as Sweden's foremost woman. The daughter of Emil Key, a Member of the Swedish Riksdag, and Countess Sophia Posse, her mental powers were early recognised by Björnson. At the age of 30, owing to the loss of her father's fortune, she entered upon a teaching career, and, in addition, began to lecture at a working men's institute on reform and economics. She also established courses in history and literature for young women of all classes. In 1903, she went abroad, and undertook a number of lecturing tours. The success of her books and lectures enabled her to build a home of her own at Alvastra, in Southern Sweden. Altogether she wrote more than 30 books in Swedish, chiefly concerned with the welfare of women and children.

DISFRANCHISED WIDOWS.

Last Monday, LT.-COL. ACLAND-TROYTE (U., Tiverton) asked the Home Secretary whether he was aware that, under the Economy Bill, a woman whose husband dies during March, April, or May is disfranchised for twelve months; and whether he will introduce legislation during this Session to remedy this situation? CAPT. HACKING (Under-Secretary, Home Office) replied: “The question put by my hon. and gallant Friend is based on an assumption that under the existing law a widow, on her husband's death, must herself acquire a qualification by occupation of premises throughout the qualifying period. It is by no means certain that this assumption is correct; but supposing that it is, it will be the case, as suggested in the question, that the registration of widows whose husbands die during the three months referred to will be deferred for six months as the result of the abolition of the Spring Register. On the other hand, widows whose husbands die during the months of December, January, and February will, by reason of the reduction of the qualifying period, be registered six months earlier than under the present system of two registers a year. The question is one which should be considered by the proposed Committee on the franchise, and, as the Home Secretary promised last year, he will see that it is brought to their notice. LT.-COL. ACLAND-TROYTE naturally inquired if it was not very undesirable that there should be doubt as to whether these women are allowed to vote, or not? CAPT. HACKING said that that doubt would certainly be cleared up. We think it nothing less than disgraceful that so many widows should already have been deprived of their vote through all these years merely on what Capt. Hacking was pleased to call an “assumption.” We note that this question also will be discussed at the Government's proposed Conference. If married women were granted the vote on the same terms as men—at the age of twenty-one and on a short residential qualification—instead of, as at present, at the age of thirty and on their husband's qualification, this difficulty would not occur. Why should married women be considered as an appendage of their husband when qualifying for a vote? As citizens, we demand that all women in this country—married and single—shall receive the vote at the same age and on the same terms as men.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Women Chairmen.

Mrs. Swann, J.P., has been elected chairman of the Northampton Board of Guardians, and Mrs. C. Wilson vice-chairman. Mrs. B. M. Drapper, a member of the Food Council, has been re-elected chairman of the Greenwich Board of Guardians. Mrs. Katherine McEntee, wife of the late Member for West Walthamstow, has been unanimously elected chairman of the Walthamstow Urban District Council. She is the first woman to occupy that position. Miss Ethel Hovey, a native of Sheffield, is the first woman chairman of the Colwyn Bay Council.

Women Motorists' Successes.

At Brooklands last week Mrs. George Duller won by 100 yards the $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles race, and Mrs. Christie won the $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles by 200 yds. Among the gold medallists in the competition held by the Newcastle-on-Tyne and District Motor Club on Saturday was Nurse M. Beddington, of Walsingham, who rode a Velocette used in her daily work as a district nurse. She shared honours with such famous women riders as Miss M. Cottle and Miss L. Ball.

Women and Church Activities.

Women have a majority of nearly 4 to 1 on the electoral roll of St. Paul's Church, Westcliff. Only 69 men are registered against 221 women. The men's club records a membership of 42 to the women's guild total of 107. Three women were elected to the rural-decanal conference.

IN PARLIAMENT.

House of Lords.

CAPT. CROOKSHANK (U., Gainsborough) gave notice that on Wednesday, 5th May, he would call attention to the Powers and Constitution of the House of Lords, and move a resolution.

Electoral System.

SIR ROBERT HAMILTON (Lib., Orkney and Shetland) gave notice that on Wednesday, 12th May, he would call attention to the inequalities of the present electoral system, and move a resolution.

Sexual Offences (Custody of Children).

MR. RADFORD (U., Salford, S.) asked the Home Secretary whether his attention had been drawn to the case of a man who has been sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour for criminal offences against his daughter, aged 14 years, who has now been removed from his control, and to the statement made at his trial that he has a second daughter, aged eight years, but that no similar order could be made with regard to her; and will he take the necessary action to save this child from coming under her father's control after his release from prison? CAPT. HACKING (Under-Secretary, Home Office): The Home Secretary is unable in the present state of the law to take any steps in regard to the younger daughter, but he has ascertained that the Director of Public Prosecutions is in communication as to her future with those to whom the elder daughter has been entrusted under an Order of the Court before which this man was convicted, and that he is satisfied that every care has been, and is being, taken of the children by their relatives. MR. RADFORD: If our law is so imperfect that, though a child against whom an offence was committed can be transferred to the custody of other people in whose care she will be safe, is it not the duty of the Home Secretary to take steps to have the law altered so that the other child may be similarly protected? MR. BRIANT (Lib., N. Lambeth): Is it not possible that children can be adopted by boards of guardians under a magistrate's order where the parents are unsuitable to have control, and is not this a method by which this and similar cases could be got over? CAPT. HACKING: That is a legal point of which I must have notice.

Next day, MR. RADFORD repeated his question to the Home Secretary. SIR WILLIAM JOYNSON-HICKS replied: I am aware of the defect in the law to which attention was drawn by the Committee on Sexual Offences against Young Persons. I understand that the Committee on Young Offenders and Neglected Children is likely to propose a number of Amendments to the Children Act, 1908, and I will consider the whole matter when their Report is received. VISCONTRESS ASTOR: Is it not possible, under Section 21 of the Children Act, that this child should be taken away from its father? SIR W. JOYNSON-HICKS: I really think the noble Lady is wrong. The child against whom the offence was committed has been by law taken away from the father. The question relates to the child of eight. I am advised by my legal advisers that there is a defect in the law and that, although the father committed an offence against the older child, there is no power to take the younger child away from him, but by arrangement with other members of the family the younger child has been taken away and is now being cared for. MR. AMMON (Lab., N. Camberwell): Is it not possible for the Poor Law guardians to take care of the children? SIR W. JOYNSON-HICKS: I can only say that we have carefully gone into the question with the utmost desire to deal with this very sad case. If we had power we would certainly apply to the Court. The matter is being attended to by a Committee now sitting at the Home Office, and, I am sure, as soon as I bring in a Bill it will receive the assent of the House.

Widows' Pensions (Deprivation for Misconduct).

SIR JOHN PENNEFATHER (U., Kirkdale) asked the Minister of Pensions whether a war widow, who is accused of misconduct, has any opportunity of answering the accusation before a decision to deprive her of her pension is arrived at; if not, whether she has any right of appeal against an adverse decision; and, if so, by what means and to whom can she appeal? MAJOR TRYON: I am glad to be able to assure my hon. Friend that a decision to deprive a widow of pension is not made by the Special Grants Committee until the widow has been informed of the charges against her, and has been expressly given an opportunity to state her case in person or in writing through the appropriate War Pensions Committee. MR. R. MORRISON (Co-op., N. Tottenham): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether, in a case in which a widow is deprived of her pension, she is deprived of it permanently, or whether, after the lapse of a year or so, she can apply for it to be restored? MAJOR TRYON: I am glad to say that in many cases we have been able to restore these pensions. MR. PALING (Lab., Doncaster): Is it the fact that in these cases the widow is not allowed to know who has given the information? Is anonymous information taken notice of in these cases? THE SPEAKER: That does not arise.

Emigrants (Inspection).

COMMANDER BELLAIRS (U., Maidstone) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under what agreement the International Labour Office at Geneva inquires into the arrangements made for emigrants by shipping companies, and so throws expense on British shipping companies; and whether he has consulted with the Board of Trade in this matter? SIR A. STEEL-MAITLAND: I have been asked to reply. The question of the simplification of the inspection of emigrants on board ship was included, by decision of the governing body of the International Labour Office, in the Agenda for the Eighth Session of the International Labour Conference, which is to be held in Geneva next month. I am in consultation with my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade as to the attitude to be adopted on this matter by the British Government delegates to the Conference.

[Because the question of inspection of emigrants on board ship is one of immense interest to British women, we have urged upon the Government the advisability of appointing a woman as a fully accredited delegate to this International Labour Conference.]

Temporary Clerks (Writing Assistants).

MR. T. WILLIAMS (Lab., Don Valley) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the objection against offering any class of permanent employment to temporary clerks who passed as writing assistants in the open competitive examination in 1919? MR. MCNEILL: All the women who received offers of posts as writing assistants on their performance in the open competition held in 1919, and who accepted those offers, have been appointed as writing assistants. Examinations for this grade have been held subsequently, at which temporary staff have been eligible to compete, and it is not possible to reopen the list resulting from the 1919 examinations. MR. WILLIAMS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that many of those who did pass the first examination are still regarded as temporary clerks, they are not yet on permanent employment, and will he give the reason for objecting to giving them permanent employment? MR. MCNEILL: I do not think the hon. Member's information is correct. MR. WILLIAMS: It is perfectly correct.

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THE CONFERENCE—AND AFTER.

No one could doubt the success of our Nineteenth Annual Conference. The enthusiasm of the delegates from our Branches, their point of view on matters which specially concerned women, and their determination to see the objects of the Women's Freedom League carried into effect were most encouraging; and now that those delegates have returned to their own districts, we have every confidence that they will make the equality of the sexes a living issue throughout the coming year. On the necessity for a franchise measure granting the vote to women at the same age and on the same terms as men, the Women's Freedom League is unanimous. Scorn was poured upon the Government's proposal of a Conference on this subject. Before now, women have seen their Bills talked out by Members of Parliament. That is the politicians' favourite method of postponing the subjects they dislike, and which they have not the courage to oppose. The Government's proposed Conference practically suppressed the agitation in Parliament for equal suffrage, but the Women's Freedom League has resolved that this question shall become a vital one in every constituency throughout the country within the next year, and that the agitation for the equal enfranchisement of women with men shall increase in intensity—outside Parliament, if not inside—until this cause is won. Our unalterable demand is that the Government shall bring in a simple Equal Franchise Bill, and pass it into law without delay. As we said before, the Equal Political Rights Demonstration on July 3rd will not be the culmination of our efforts, but rather the beginning of renewed effort to achieve the primary object for which our suffrage societies were founded—the Parliamentary vote for women at the same age and on the same terms as men. The Peeresses Bill received unanimous support from our Conference, the delegates maintaining that women Members are as necessary in the House of Lords as they are in the House of Commons, in view of the facts that we have two Houses of Legislature and that all legislation concerns both men and women citizens. As a matter of course, the delegates demanded equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men throughout all branches of our national life. The position of married women occupied a good part of the Agenda, the Women's Freedom League standing for the equal right of a British married woman with a British man to change, or retain, her nationality; to be assessed and taxed separately from her husband for income-tax; to have equal rights and responsibilities in the home with the father over her children; and to have the unquestioned right to remunerative employment. Delegates also agreed that our law should be amended so that a husband could not will all his estate away from his wife and leave her practically penniless at his death. The position of unemployed women received due consideration, and a demand was made that local authorities should be responsible for their training and employment. The need for women to share with men the highest positions in the administration of our lunacy and prison systems was once again insisted upon; and the Home Secretary was again called upon to initiate legislation on the lines of Miss Wilkinson's Bill, which would make it compulsory on watch and county joint committees to appoint women police. An equal moral standard was demanded for both sexes, and the raising the age of consent for girls to 18, with a similar protection for boys. The above subjects form the basis of the immediate programme of the Women's Freedom League—but first and foremost we place equal political rights for women and men.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The last meeting of the old Executive Committee was held at the Women's Freedom League Offices, Friday, April 23rd, those present being Miss Anna Munro (President) in the chair, Dr. Knight (Hon. Treasurer), Mrs. Dexter, Mrs. Juson Kerr, J.P., Miss M. I. Neal, and the Secretary. Letters regretting inability to be present were read from Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., Miss C. Neal, Miss Spriggs, and Mrs. Strickland. Letters of sympathy were sent to Mrs. Strickland on account of the serious illness of her husband, and to Miss Alix Clark on account of her own prolonged illness.

Reports were considered and adopted from the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Organising Secretary (Mrs. Whetton), the Secretary, and from the political, literature, and VOTE sales departments. Delegates were nominated for the Congress at Paris of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Reports were received from our representatives of meetings of the Consultative Committee, the Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations, the Women's Advisory Council of the League of Nations Union, the Equal Political Rights Demonstration Committee, and the Parliamentary and Legislative Sectional Committee of the National Council of Women. At the Committee's request, Miss Munro agreed to represent the Women's Freedom League on a deputation to Miss Susan Lawrence (convened by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship) to put before her our views against restrictive, or "protective" legislation for women. Arrangements for our Annual Conference were discussed, and Miss Munro submitted her Chairman's address to the Committee. This was warmly approved; and the following resolution, which was passed unanimously, concluded the proceedings:—That this Committee offers its best thanks to Miss Munro for her happy and harmonious chairmanship throughout the year, and for her great activity on behalf of the Women's Freedom League during her year of office."

A BAN ON WOMEN?

It is reported that the Hull Corporation Art Gallery Committee has refused to issue tickets for women to the enclosure at the new Ferens Art Gallery stone-laying by the Prince of Wales next month. It is stated that the decision was arrived at solely because of lack of accommodation, and that invitations have been issued to the principal women of the city to be present on the balcony of the City Hall near by, from which they will be able to see all that transpires. The fact remains, however, that only men will be admitted to the enclosure, and that the women on the balcony will be far enough away to require the use of opera glasses to enable them to see the details of the actual ceremony. We are told that this decision is strongly resented by the women of Hull, and we can quite believe it.

Women in London also have a grievance. We have received a poster from the League of Nations Union announcing a Great Demonstration on the Limitation of Armaments to take place at an early date. Women's organisations are asked to support this Demonstration; but we notice that only men—distinguished men, it is true—are billed to speak. Why is no woman among these speakers? Women do a great deal of work in the provinces on behalf of this Union, both as speakers and organisers of its meetings. We suggest that if the League of Nations Union desires the support of women at its Great Demonstrations in London, it should not put a ban on women speakers, but include them equally with men on its public platforms. No one can maintain that there are not distinguished women who have a good deal of first-hand knowledge of the League of Nations and of international affairs, and members of women's organisations would cordially appreciate an opportunity of hearing their views together with those of distinguished men on the subject at issue.

OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

President: Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence.
Hon. Treasurer: Dr. Knight.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Mrs. Brading, Miss A. M. Clark, Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., Mrs. Dexter, Mrs. Flowers, Mrs. Harverson, Mrs. Juson Kerr, J.P., Miss Anna Munro, Miss C. Neal, Miss M. I. Neal, Mrs. Pierotti, Scottish Delegates (Mrs. Fiskin, Miss Mandlark, Miss Eunice Murray, Miss Spriggs).

URGENCY RESOLUTION.

That this Conference calls upon the Government to adopt the Peeresses Bill recently introduced by Lord Astor in the House of Lords, and to pass it into law without delay.

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS.

Chief Objects of the League Reaffirmed.

This Conference reaffirms the position of the Women's Freedom League in regard to (1) equal suffrage; (2) eligibility of women for the House of Lords; (3) equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men throughout all branches of our national life; (4) women's unemployment; (5) women prison commissioners, women governors, women deputy-governors and women medical officers in all women's prisons and women's sections of prisons; (6) the separate assessment and separate taxation of the incomes of married persons for the purpose of Income Tax.

Political.

This Conference expresses its extreme indignation that the King's Speech contained no reference to the equal enfranchisement of women with men, and calls upon the Government to introduce and to carry into law without delay a simple franchise measure which will enfranchise women at the same age and on the same terms as men.

This Conference calls upon the Government to initiate and pass into law immediately a short Act to prevent municipal authorities and other corporate bodies from imposing conditions of employment which are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919.

Women and Children.

This Conference calls upon the Government to introduce a Bill, and carry it through into law, which will make the mother an equal guardian with the father of her children.

This Conference calls upon the Government to insist that local government authorities carry out the Guardianship of Children Act and allow mothers equal rights with fathers in claiming exemption from vaccination.

That, in view of the great number of unemployed women, this Conference calls upon the Ministry of Labour to initiate, through local authorities, schemes for the training and employment of women in home-craft, hair-dressing, nursing, home-dressmaking, poultry-farming, bee-keeping, etc., and similar trades according to the needs of the district.

That the law be amended as regards husband and wife so that it be impossible for a man to leave his wife penniless, and that she be entitled to at least one-third of his estate, or one-half if childless, as in Scotland.

Considering the dangers to which children of tender age are liable through being out late at night unaccompanied by an adult, we would urge Parliament and local governing bodies to legislate and provide for their protection to a greater extent than is done at present by the appointment of women police, and would favour at the same time a campaign to draw the attention of parents to those dangers and to the need of stricter supervision over all children.

Equal Moral Standard.

This Conference demands an equal moral standard for men and women, and the raising of the age of consent to 18 for girls and boys.

Education.

This Conference protests against any reduction of the Government's grant to local education authorities,

and demands that the 1918 Education Act be put into force at once.

This Conference protests against the raising of the school age of admission of elementary scholars, and the abolition of the continuation classes, which must lower the standard of education in Britain, in comparison with that of other nations.

Housing.

This Conference calls upon the Government to make it compulsory for local authorities to build more houses, especially more for letting purposes, which can be let at a reasonable rent consistent with the needs and wages of the district.

National Insurance.

This Conference protests against the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act on account of its contributory nature, the inadequacy of the benefits, and the unfairness of their distribution among contributors, and demands that the Contributory Pensions Act be so amended that no contributor can entirely fall out of benefit, and that no class shall be arbitrarily excluded.

This Conference, believing that there is insufficient provision for guarding the health of mothers and children, requests the Government to take into consideration the extension of the benefits of Health Insurance to the wives and children of insured persons by granting allowances to dependents during the illness of the insured persons.

Lunacy Reform.

This Conference calls for the appointment of an equal number of women members with men on the Board of Control.

This Conference urges that women doctors should be in charge of all women patients in Public Mental Hospitals; that women should be appointed on the Visiting Committees of all Public Mental Hospitals; and that women inspectors should be appointed by the Board of Control.

Penal Reform.

This Conference urges that more women be appointed as members of the Advisory Committees of the Commission of the Peace, and that the number of women magistrates throughout the country be increased.

This Conference desires to call attention to the fact that women seldom serve on Watch Committees, and that it is desirable, in the interests of public morality, that there should be women in equal numbers on Watch Committees.

This Conference calls upon the Home Secretary to initiate legislation at the earliest possible date on the lines of the Municipal Corporations Act Amending Bill introduced last December in the House of Commons by Miss Wilkinson, which would make it compulsory on watch committees of borough councils to appoint from time to time a sufficient number of fit women as well as a sufficient number of fit men to be borough constables.

That in all cases of assaults on children and young girls fines should be abolished, and terms of imprisonment should be lengthened, and, if necessary, remedial treatment be given.

This Conference demands the appointment of women as park-keepers on the same terms as men.

Railway Carriages Reserved for Women.

This Conference calls upon the Government to bring forward and carry into law a Bill requiring all trains to include compartments for women only, and that a

fairer proportion of compartments should be non-smoking.

General.

This Conference demands women censors of films to prevent unhealthy pictures being presented before children.

At the close of the Conference, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, who received an ovation on her election as President for the ensuing year, paid a warm tribute to Miss Anna Munro's able Presidency during 1925-26, which was cordially supported by Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence then briefly outlined the policy of the Women's Freedom League for the coming year. She pointed out how practically the whole of the Woman's Movement was just then concentrating on Peace, and the organisation of a great Pilgrimage and Demonstration in the early summer, and suggested that this organisation might very well be used as the basis of and introduction to an Equal Suffrage Campaign in the autumn. The Women's Freedom League proposed to call together, in September, representatives of all the chief women's organisations, and to form a temporary *ad hoc* Central Committee, which would then formulate other similar *ad hoc* local committees in all parts of the country, consisting of members of every women's organisation in that particular locality. These local committees would organise joint deputations to their local Members of Parliament, asking these (a) to ballot for a place for a private Member's Bill; (b) to promise to be in the House and vote when such a measure was brought forward; and (c) to keep the subject constantly to the front by questions in the House and in other ways. The replies to the deputation would all be forwarded to the Central Committee, and filed as an index of the expected support, or otherwise, of Members of Parliament.

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence concluded by stressing the extreme importance of obtaining the vote on equal terms with as little delay as possible. Nine years ago, the women of this country had accepted a compromise, which nevertheless had created a new race of womanhood and instituted many reforms, but now the first bloom of emancipation was staling, and a period of reaction setting in. This was evident in the hostility manifested to-day by public authorities in the case of married women workers.

Delegates attended the Conference from Hampstead, Mid-London, Minerva Club, and Thames Valley Branches, and from Ashford, Deal and Walmer, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Portsmouth, Wallasey, Dunoon, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Swansea Branches.

MINERVA CLUB RECEPTION.

A Reception to Conference Delegates, members and friends of the Women's Freedom League, was held last Sunday afternoon at the Minerva Club, and in spite of the inclement weather was well attended. Speeches from Delegates and the National Executive Committee formed the chief feature of the afternoon, Miss Anna Munro presiding, and were interspersed by some altogether delightful Irish songs and stories from Miss Marks, a member of our Minerva Club Branch. Those of us who had already had the pleasure of hearing Miss Marks over the wireless were delighted to meet this talented artist in the flesh.

Speakers at the Reception included Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P. (Middlesbrough), Dr. Lewin, Mrs. Juson Kerr, J.P. (Deal & Walmer), Mrs. Andain (Wallasey), Miss Manclark (Edinburgh), Dr. Knight, Miss Rance (Hastings), Mrs. Mustard, Mrs. Brading (Portsmouth), Miss Sparkman (Mid-London), Miss Orman (Deal & Walmer), and Miss Reeves (Minerva Club). Branch Delegates enumerated the various activities in their special districts, and other speakers stressed the necessity for steady political work in view of the hoped-for victory for Equal Citizenship in the immediate future. Our special thanks are due to Miss Reeves and her helpers for the excellent tea provided.

BILLS OF INTEREST TO WOMEN.

To-day (Friday) it is hoped that time will be found to take the Second Reading of the *Equalisation of the Franchise* Bill introduced in the House of Commons on February 8th by Capt. Wedgwood Benn. This Bill is supported by Mr. Briant, Mr. Crawford, Commander Kenworthy, Mr. Livingstone, Mr. Morris, Mr. Runciman, Mr. Fenby, Mr. Harris, Mr. Trevelyan Thomson, Miss Wilkinson, and Mr. Pethick-Lawrence. The object of this Bill is to confer the franchise on women on the same terms as those on which it is exercised by men.

The *Parliament (Qualification of Peers)* Bill, which was introduced in the House of Lords on April 20th by Lord Astor, will come up for its Second Reading on May 13th. It provides that a peeress in her own right in this country shall be entitled to receive a writ of summons to Parliament, and to sit and vote in the House of Lords as fully as if she were a man; further, that a woman being the holder in her own right of any peerage of Scotland or Ireland, if otherwise qualified, shall be entitled as fully as if she were a man, to vote at the elections of representative peers of Scotland or Ireland respectively, and to be an elected representative of the peerage of Scotland or Ireland, and as such to sit and vote in the House of Lords. In 1924, the House of Commons recorded an overwhelming vote in favour of a similar Bill, and, last Session, when the vote was taken on this Bill in the House of Lords, it was only defeated by two votes. We earnestly hope that the Government will adopt this Bill and pass it into law without delay. Women are as necessary in the House of Lords as they are in the House of Commons.

The *Juvenile Courts (Scotland)* Bill—"to provide for the appointment of women justices of the peace to act as assessors in Juvenile Courts in Scottish Burghs"—was introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Westwood on April 20th.

A FAMOUS WOMAN ECONOMIST.

The death of Mrs. Lilian Knowles, Litt.D., M.A., LL.M., Professor of Economic History in the University of London, removes a very famous woman economist from our midst. A Girton graduate, Mrs. Knowles took First Class Honours in both Historical and Law Triposes at Cambridge, then for three years, 1896-1899, she held a research studentship at the London School of Economics, which had recently been founded, and in 1904 she came back as lecturer, and began that long connection with the School which was only ended by her death. She was Dean of the Faculty of Economics in the University of London from 1920-1924, being the first woman to serve in such a capacity. She was also a member of the Departmental Committee on the rise in the cost of living to the working classes, 1918, and was the only woman member of the Royal Commission on the Income Tax, 1919-1920. In this capacity, it will be remembered, she signed the Minority Report, which recommended the separate assessment and separate taxation of married people's incomes. Her lectures and researches resulted in the production of two books, which are having a wide circulation, "The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions in Great Britain" and "The Economic Development of the Overseas Empire, 1763-1914." The first is the best account we have of the economic changes that followed the great inventions of the 18th and 19th centuries. Mrs. Knowles will be very greatly missed by Progressive women, and mourned by generations of students who knew and loved her all over the world, and who wrote regularly to tell her of their progress.

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WHERE TO GO.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, April 30th, at 2 p.m.
Jumble Sale at Nine Elms, for the Benefit of the Women's Freedom League.
Monday, May 10th, at 3 p.m.
Hampstead Branch. Members' Meeting at 16, Denning Road, N.W.3.
May 30th—June 6th.
Tenth I.W.S.A. Congress at the Sorbonne, Paris.

DARE TO BE FREE.

Saturday, June 19th.
Peacemakers' Pilgrimage, Great Demonstration in Hyde Park.
June 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.
British Commonwealth League Conference.
Saturday June 26th, at 10 a.m.
National Executive Committee Meeting.
Wednesday, June 30th, at 7 p.m.
Mrs. Despard's Birthday Party, Caxton Hall.
Saturday, July 3rd.
Great Combined Equal Political Rights Procession and Hyde Park Demonstration.

PROVINCES.

Friday, April 30th, at 3 p.m.
Ashford Branch. Members' Meeting at the Hempstead Street Hall.
Monday, May 3rd, at 7.30 p.m.
Middlesbrough Branch. Members' Meeting at Agecroft, Linthorpe. Conference Report by Delegate.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Monday, May 3rd, at 4 p.m.
The Women's Institute, 70, Victoria Street, S.W.1. Speaker: Miss C. Haslett (Director E.A.W.) Subject: "The Government Electrical Bill."
Monday, May 3rd, at 5.45 p.m.
Six Point Group, 92, Victoria Street, S.W. Meeting on the Peers Bill.
Monday, May 3rd, at 8.15 p.m. (Coffee at 8.)
Saturday Speech Club, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C. Debate: "That England Needs a Mussolini." Proposer: Miss Wyatt. Opposer: Miss Katharine Tennant.
Wednesday, May 5th, at 3 p.m.
Golders Green Study Circle, at 13, Temple Fortune Court, N.W.11. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood. Subject: "The Work of the Women's Freedom League."
Friday, May 7th, at 1 p.m.
Electrical Association for Women. Luncheon at the Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly. Speakers: Rt. Hon. Lt.-Col. Wilfrid Ashley, M.P. (Minister of Transport), Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Sir Hugo Hirst, Bart. Tickets 6/6.

HEADQUARTERS SALE.

Miss Cole is most kindly holding a Jumble Sale for the Women's Freedom League at the Nine Elms Settlement on Friday, April 30th, at 2 p.m. Goods of all descriptions are urgently wanted, and may be taken or sent to Dr. Knight at the Settlement, 2, Currie Street, Nine Elms Lane, S.W.

BRANCH NOTES.

MID-LONDON.

The Mid-London Branch took advantage of the fact that so many good speakers would be in town for the Annual Conference, to arrange a meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday morning, April 24th. We were fortunate in getting our late President (Miss Anna Munro) to speak, and Miss McLelland, the Glasgow delegate, took the chair, and also addressed the meeting again after Miss Anna Munro. In spite of a cutting wind both speakers held the attention of an interested crowd, and made the views of the Women's Freedom League on the present disabilities, political and economic, of women very clear. There has been difficulty in getting speakers for Sunday morning meetings, but we hope to continue the open-air meetings in Hyde Park on a weekday evening. Due notice of these meetings will be given in THE VOTE, and we should like to urge all those who are able to come and help us. The Branch is very grateful to Miss Munro and Miss McLelland for so kindly helping us last Sunday after their long and busy day on Saturday. C. M. SPARKMAN.

EDINBURGH.

On Wednesday, April 22nd, a very well-attended meeting was held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall, on the subject of Women and the Ministry. The Rev. Dr. Hector MacPherson was in the chair, and was regrettably obliged to commence his remarks by apologising for the absence of Dame Louisa Lumsden, who was, unfortunately, much too ill to be present. Dr. MacPherson spoke very strongly against the feeling which prevented women from preaching in the Church, but rather expressed regret that woman's demand for admission to the ministry should have coincided with a dearth of men ministers; he did not want it to appear that they were wanted simply because the Church couldn't get men. He would have liked the Church to welcome women's help, even though they had an ample supply of candidates of the opposite sex. Dr. MacPherson was followed by Miss Eunice G. Murray (President of the Glasgow Branch

of the Women's Freedom League) who spoke in her usual witty and arresting style, dealing with the various frivolous arguments put forward as to why women were unsuitable as ministers. She said it would have been more honest of our opponents if they had simply admitted that they didn't want women—they wanted to keep at least one profession exclusively for themselves. She mentioned someone who said disparagingly that Miss Maude Royden's congregation was two-thirds women, but added that surely this was true of all church congregations. Women had always attended to the least honoured, and of course unpaid, part of church work. One clergyman gave Miss Maude Royden permission to "speak" in his church from a "footstool," but she might not "preach" from the "pulpit." Next came Miss Mildred Dobson, B.D., B.Sc. (Warden of the Women's University Hall at St. Andrews), who had very kindly come to Edinburgh to speak at this meeting. She dealt with the historical facts and reasons in connection with women's position in the Church, laying stress on the importance attached by some people to the sayings of St. Paul, but submitting that his injunctions could not possibly apply to the enlightened women of to-day. In those days priestesses played a great part in heathen worship, and doubtless St. Paul wished there to be every possible distinction between Christianity and the religions it was superseding. Miss Hewat, M.A., of the United Free Women's Missionary College, proposed the vote of thanks to the speakers and chairman, saying that, although woman wished to take the place to which she had always been entitled in the work of the Church, it must not be thought that there was any question of a sex war, or rivalry between men and women, in this respect. Miss Hewat wishes to go abroad to do missionary work, but wants to be properly ordained first, even as is a man. A good collection was taken (containing a gold half-sovereign); literature, including Miss Eunice Murray's new pamphlets—"Women and the Ministry" and "The Pilgrim Mothers"—and VOTES sold, and new members enrolled. (Org.) LILIAN LENTON.

GLASGOW.

There was a good attendance at the Public Meeting held in the McLellan Galleries, Glasgow, on April 21st, at 8 p.m., the subject for discussion being "Slum Clearance." Miss Eunice G. Murray very ably presided in the chair. Miss Murray, in her opening remarks, said that for years women had been told not to trouble about the vote, but to content themselves within their own homes. There never was a greater insult offered to women, considering that so many of the homes were mere hovels. When they looked round to-day they felt dismayed and ashamed at the housing conditions under which so many people had to live, and it was surely time that all classes were uniting in an effort to clear away the slums, which had so long been a disgrace to the nation. Slums bred misery and poor health, and their inmates filled our hospitals and our prisons. If we swept them away this country would progress as it never progressed before. Dr. Chalmers Smith, Miss Isobel Hamilton, and Mrs. Hunter spoke on the subject from their own experience. Dr. Forgan said that man-made laws had resulted in great improvements in the factories and schools, but nothing had yet been done for the places in which women did their work, and which were in many cases no better to-day than they were one hundred years ago. It was therefore high time that women themselves took a hand in dealing with this problem. In Glasgow, housing conditions instead of getting better were getting worse, as every year there were at least 1,200 houses which were becoming unfit and increasing the total of those already condemned. It seemed to him that the only hope was to conceive a greater Glasgow—a Glasgow greater in spirit as well as in extent. We must take our factories and workshops out into the country, and build around them garden cities in which the workers and their children could lead healthy lives. These garden cities might then be connected by electric railways, or buses, and have their own schools, cinemas, playing-fields, public libraries, and swimming-baths. That, in his opinion, was the ultimate solution of the housing problem of Glasgow. It would not cost anything to get rid of the slums, for we would get far more back. Even if we put up the housing rate by 2½d. per £1, we would bring down the police rate, the education rate, and the public health rate, and the parish rate. And what was more important, we would bring down the death-rate among the children of the poor. It would also pay the community as a matter of self-protection to get rid of the slums, which were the breeding ground of infectious diseases. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the speakers by Miss Jane Thomson, and to Miss Eunice G. Murray by Dr. Forgan. A collection was taken, and literature sold. (Asst. Sec.) R. McDOUGALL.

WALLASEY.

A deeply interested audience gathered in the Town Hall, Wallasey, on Monday of last week, on the initiative of the Wallasey Branch of the Women's Freedom League, to hear Mrs. Shilston Watkins, LL.A., speak on "The Peacemakers' Pilgrimage." The Rector of Wallasey (the Rev. G. D. White) presided. Mrs. Shilston Watkins described the organisation of the Peace Pilgrimage, which was an all-Party movement, and would appeal to women of all Parties. Its purpose was to rouse public opinion to demand "Law, not War." Peace could only come as a result of sowing the seed in an organised way. Everyone wanted Peace, but ideas were vague of how it was to come. Mrs. Watkins then proceeded to give hints on organising as adopted by the Liverpool Committee, of which she was Chairman. A vote of thanks to the speaker was proposed by Mrs. Parry, seconded by Mrs. Francis Williams, and heartily accorded. In connection with this meeting, another was held in the Welsh Presbyterian Schoolroom, Martin's Lane, last Monday, to elect officers and sub-committees.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guild-house, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, May 2nd. 3.30. Music. Lecture. Miss Gladys Burlton, M.A. 6.30. Miss Maude Royden.

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