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British Commonwealth League.

ANNUAL REPORT.

JUNE 1929—MAY 1930.

Conference. Our 5th Annual Conference was held on June 5th and 6th at the Royal Society of Arts. The Subjects for discussion being "Women and the Future" :—(a) Women of the less forward races within the British Commonwealth, their need and our Responsibility. (b) The Enfranchised Women of the Future. Delegates attended from 32 Societies, the following Countries being represented :—Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Ceylon, Great Britain, India, New Zealand, Union of S. Africa. Our President, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, presided over a very successful and interesting gathering.

The following Social functions took place in connection with the Conference :—**An evening party** at the Suffolk Galleries when our overseas visitors had the opportunity of meeting the Hon. Lady Bailey, D.B.E., Miss Jean Iris Howard, Agent General for Nova Scotia, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Miss Maude Royden and others. **A Luncheon** at the Criterion Restaurant—our guests were Lady Allardyce, Madame Austral, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Lady Simon.

A Motor Excursion to Mr. and Mrs. Powell's beautiful home near Guildford where we received the kindest of welcomes and most generous hospitality.

Council Meeting. The Council meeting on June 7th was well attended by delegates from all parts of the Commonwealth. The finances of the League were fully discussed and several of the delegates present promised to ask their overseas societies to send extra financial help. It was agreed to raise the Annual Subscription from 5/- to 7/6. Mrs. Rama Rau was appointed on to the Standing Committee as representative of the Women's Indian Association. It was decided to prepare a Memorandum for the Imperial Conference.

Membership and Affiliation. Our individual Membership has been increased by 55 during the year and we have to welcome as new affiliated societies the Hendon Citizens' Council, and the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child. (Great Britain).

Political and General Work. The League is represented on the following Committees :—The Women's Peace Crusade, Women in the Service of Hospital Committees, Women Peers' Committee, Indo-British Welfare League.

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The League was represented on the following Deputations: Deputation to the Home Secretary on Women Police, organised by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and the National Council of Women. Deputation to the Home Secretary on The Nationality of Married Women, organised by the National Council of Women.

The League has co-operated or sent representatives to The Hague Conference; The Women's Peace Crusade Conference and Public Meeting; St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance; The Commonwealth of India Conference; Women's International League; Survey of Women in India Conference; National Union of Women Teachers' Equal Pay Meeting; League of Nations' Conference; Slavery Demonstration.

The Berlin Congress. Miss Collisson organised and conducted a party of 35 delegates and visitors to the Berlin Congress. Mrs. Guy Innes went as the League's Fraternal Delegate.

Memorial to the Five Power Naval Conference. This Memorial was drawn up by the Women's Peace Crusade and other Societies and the League agreed to support it.

Nationality of Married Women. A great deal of work has been done in this matter. The League, along with other societies, put forward the name of Dr. Ivy Williams, Chairman of the British Federation of University Women's Nationality Committee, as Delegate to the codification Conference at the Hague and she was duly appointed. The League also recommended that Miss Crystal MacMillan be appointed as Technical advisor.

A special joint memorandum prepared with the National Council of Women was sent overseas with requests for support. This memorandum covered nearly all working societies interested in the problem and was widely read and used as propaganda.

At the joint Deputation arranged to the Home Secretary, Miss Collisson spoke as the representative of the Dominions.

Canadian Appeal Case. Miss Collisson and Mrs. Menken attended various sittings of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council dealing with the case of five Women appealing for admission to the Senate.

Bermuda. In July of last year representatives of the Bermuda Women's Suffrage Society called on Miss Collisson and asked for help in preparing the ground for suffrage work. Introductions were given to Dr. Marion Phillips, Lady Astor, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, and letters written to other women members of Parliament. When this year the Bermuda women sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies an important memorandum asking for a commission of enquiry into the Constitution of Bermuda, the B.C.L. took up the matter with Dr. Drummond Shiels, Miss Wilkinson, Lady Astor, and wrote also to the Colonial Office. Letters and material were sent to the "Times,"

"Time and Tide" and the "Tablet," and questions were asked in the House. There at present the matter stands.

Mui Tsai system in Hong Kong. This subject has been keenly taken up by the League and Mrs. Haslewood has given us her valuable advice from time to time.

Vice Laws. In response to a letter from headquarters, the affiliated societies in Queensland have promised to examine carefully existing conditions. In Tasmania the situation is also under examination but the work takes time.

Law regarding women in Restaurants after given hours. The League was represented, and Miss Collisson spoke in regard to this matter at a meeting arranged by St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

Affiliation Orders. Efforts are being made to co-ordinate the good work done by the National Council for the Unmarried Mother with the work of Overseas groups.

Colonial Office and the less forward races. A request was made to the Colonial Office for information on the number of women employed in services directed through or under the Colonial Office which have special bearing on the interests of women. After a delay of some two months, Mrs. Ashby was invited to call with Miss Collisson at the Colonial Office, but the information was not available except in the Library. Finally Mrs. Waterworth, of the Tasmanian Women's Non-Party League, worked in the Library and collected material for a useful memorandum, which we hope may later be published. The problems of the less forward races are in urgent need of more detailed study and work. For three years we have raised points of particular importance in this connection at Annual Conferences, sent resolutions to appropriate groups and worked to enlighten public opinion on the needs of these peoples. So late as last year, the B.C.L. was the first Society to present from Miss Burstall, Member of the Advisory Committee on Education to the Colonial Office, the policy of the Colonial Office in regard to education and the teaching of social hygiene. Our steady work is now, to some extent, bearing fruit. We fully recognise that economic conditions have operated to bring these questions into prominence, but we urge and urge again that this side of our work is of vital importance. We ask earnestly for wider support and affirm our belief that there can be no delay in dealing with the difficult and momentous problems of Imperial relationship involved.

The late Dame Millicent Fawcett. The League was officially represented at the Funeral of Dame Millicent Fawcett by Miss Collisson and Miss Solomon and at the Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey by Miss Collisson, Miss Solomon and Mrs. Stedman, many other League Members attending.

The late Miss Florence Beaumont. Miss Solomon represented the League at the Requiem Mass held in memory of our member Miss Beaumont.

Memorial to Mrs. Pankhurst. Miss Solomon was present at the unveiling of the Memorial to Mrs. Pankhurst, and on behalf of the League laid a wreath at the foot of the Statue.

Social Gatherings, Luncheons. Our informal luncheons have become a regular institution of the League and we have specially to thank Mrs. Stedman for all the practical work she does in this connection. Our guests have included Miss Jenner, Hon Sec. of the Women's Enfranchisement League of the Union of S. Africa, who spoke on S. Africa, its history and influence on the position of to-day. Mrs. Godman, who related some wonderful Red Indian Legends. Commandant Allen, who greatly interested her audience in her speech on the work of the Women Police. Miss Edith Onions, from Australia, who gave an account of her work as organiser of a News Boys' Club. The Hon. Lady Bailey, D.B.E., who spoke on Women in Aviation. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, whose speech on Peace as it affects the British Commonwealth of Nations, aroused special interest. Miss Grace Ellison spoke on the Women of Turkey, and Mrs. Israel Zangwill on the Women of Palestine. Miss Shepherd, the first woman appointed as Assistant Examiner at the Patents Office, gave an account of her work there. A public Luncheon was held at the Lyceum Club in honour of Lady Simon, whose book on Slavery has aroused such interest. She spoke on this subject, and was ably supported by Mr. John Harris, Political Sec. to the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, and Miss Nina Boyle, Mrs. John Jones, J. P., and others.

At Homes and Receptions. At Homes have been held fairly often at our Headquarters. Our Hostesses have included Mrs. Corbett Ashby; Miss Collisson; Mrs. Marshall Hole; Mrs. Guy Innes; Mrs. Rama Rau; Miss Rich; Mrs. Sharpe; Miss Solomon. The following guests have been entertained at these At Homes: Mrs. Bompas; Mrs. Rama Rau; The Hon. Lady Bailey; Dr. Mary Booth; Mrs. Sybil Morrison, and the Conference Delegates, who are too numerous to mention by name

A large and distinguished gathering was present at the Reception held at the Suffolk Galleries in honour of the wives of the delegates attending the Five Powers Naval Conference and women attached as officials.

Garden Party. By the kind invitation of Mrs. Riesco a large party of members and friends motored to her lovely home, Heathfield, Addington, where a most delightful afternoon was spent and the funds of the League were helped by competitions and character reading.

Mrs. Oglivie Gordon, J.P., kindly took a party of Overseas Women over the Juvenile Courts, which proved of great interest.

Money Raising Schemes. Two Jumble Sales have been held and resulted in a considerable sum being raised. These were kindly arranged by Miss Hoc, to whom our warm thanks are due. Two bridge parties took place at the Cowdray Club

through the kindness of Mrs. Sharpe, to whom we tender our warm thanks. These proved a great financial success owing to the energy of Mrs. Guy Innes and Mrs. Etheridge.

A "Bring and Buy" Sale took place in July, which Lady Guggisberg kindly opened. This and the successful Xmas gift sale greatly helped our Exchequer.

An American Tea Party was held by invitation of Mrs. and Miss Solomon with encouraging results.

Collecting Cards. Mrs. Innes has just initiated a novel scheme of raising funds by special collecting cards, and we hope through this means to add to our funds.

Premises. The Club has been disbanded and the Club room is now the League's general office. The small room adjoining has been let to Miss Collisson and a tenant has been found for the other two rooms. In this way the League is able to meet the very high rent.

Resignations. We have to record with regret the resignations of Mrs. Ibbotson Hutt and Mrs. Marshall Hole from the Standing Committee but are glad to have them still as interested members of the League. Also Mrs. Rama Rau, our Indian representative, whose invaluable help will be greatly missed. The Racial Hygiene Centre, New South Wales, is no longer affiliated to us. Owing to serious illness, our assistant Secretary Miss Duncan, has not been able to continue her work. Members of the League showed their appreciation of Miss Duncan's work by raising a substantial fund for her. Mrs. Becke has taken Miss Duncan's place, and we wish her all success in her labours.

Congratulations. The League warmly congratulates the Women's Enfranchisement League of the Union of S. Africa on the progress the Suffrage Bill has made—it further congratulates its members, the Hon. Lady Bailey, D.B.E., Miss Maude Royden, C.H., on the honours bestowed on them.

In Memoriam. The League has sustained a very great loss in the death of its valued member, the late Dame Millicent Fawcett, who from the earliest days of the League kept in close touch with its activities and did much to inspire and encourage its work.

In Conclusion. In addition to those already mentioned, our special thanks are due to Mrs. Stedman, our Treasurer, to Mrs. Guy Innes, chairman of the Hospitality Committee, who always throws so much enthusiasm into all her work, to Miss Collisson, our Hon. Organising and Political Secretary, and to Mrs. Menken, who worked so hard as Club Secretary. To Mr. and Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Riesco and Mrs. Sharpe, our kind hostess on various occasions. To Miss Wardell, Miss Hutt, and all those, too numerous to mention, who have helped the League in many and various ways.

FINANCIAL REPORT.

I have much pleasure in submitting the Financial Report for the year 1929-1930.

It is gratifying to note that the total of subscriptions has increased by forty pounds; partly due to the raising of the minimum subscriptions to seven and six pence, and partly to increased membership.

Affiliation fees show a decrease; also due to financial stringency overseas, which has delayed the payment of dues from certain groups, but no doubt this will be remedied within a month or two; no large gifts have been received from Societies.

Lease. We have secured an excellent tenant for the back office, and this lease has left us free to move into the rooms—formerly Club premises—in the front. Our guarantors paid up to £26 over and above loan money, but at this point it was obvious that the cost was too high, and the Club was closed down. The effort to run a Club proved impracticable, but the experiment was worth the attempt, and our hearty thanks are due to those who made it possible.

Functions. This general term covers Receptions, Luncheons, Club Meetings, Bridge Parties, etc.

Under this general heading, the satisfactory net gain of £159 has to be recorded. This is undoubtedly partly due to the fact that the reputation of the League for interesting and unusual gatherings to meet guests who have performed real public service, is steadily maintained, and to the very hard work done by individual members, to bring in funds. The League owes hearty thanks to all those who have helped to arrange Jumble Sales, Bridge Parties, and this year the successful American Tea.

A special effort was made by members to provide three months' sick pay for the assistant secretary. The sum raised, however, realised more than this, and £43 10s. was sent to Miss Duncan, appearing under Donations, and on the opposite side under Salaries.

In conclusion, it is only by the most tremendous effort on the part of the Executive that the work can be kept going on a sound basis. There is a debt of £120, lent by Mrs. Menken, on which interest is paid at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}\%$, due for furnishings and equipment for the Club, which at the moment cannot be met, and if some friend who believes in our ideals would help us in this matter, it would be a tremendous gain. But we need a larger membership, and a larger income to meet the demands of the work as it is now done, while to expand it as we ought, we need double the amount which is presented in these accounts.

MYRA STEDMAN,
Hon. Treasurer.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

Annual Financial Report—1st May, 1929, to 30th April, 1930.

<i>Receipts.</i>	£ s. d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>	£ s. d.
Balances, 1st May, 1929, at Bank and in hand	24 2 8 ³ / ₄	Rent and Repairs	116 6 8
<i>Receipts.</i>		Coal, Lighting, &c.	34 3 8 ³ / ₄
Subscriptions	133 19 0	Salaries, Insurance, and Duncan Fund..	189 9 5
Donations—including Duncan Fund* ..	68 16 10 ¹ / ₂	Postages	34 14 8 ¹ / ₂
Affiliation Fees	18 18 0	Printing and Stationery	62 13 11
Reports	7 13 0	Audit Fee	3 3 0
Functions	264 2 9 ¹ / ₂	Functions	105 5 6
Delegates' Fees and Conference	16 11 6	Conference	18 14 6
Rent	92 0 0	Telephone	23 7 7
Refund of Proportion of Legal Expenses	2 15 0	Bank Charges	1 15 8
Miscellaneous	11 12 8	Literature	2 6 0 ¹ / ₂
		Legal Charges	5 15 6
		Interest on Loan	2 8 0
		Chairs purchased	1 16 0
		Miscellaneous Expenses	11 8 11 ³ / ₄
		Balances 30th April, 1930	27 2 4 ¹ / ₄
	£640 11 6 ³ / ₄		£640 11 6 ³ / ₄

* £43 10s. received for the Duncan Fund.

CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC
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BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.
(CLUB ROOM).

For the Period 1st May, 1929, to 31st January, 1930.

<i>Receipts.</i>	£	s.	d.
To Balance, 1st May, 1929, <i>Cash at Bank</i> <i>and in hand</i>	20	6	8½
<i>Receipts.</i>			
Subscriptions	6	6	0
Guarantors	26	12	8
Lettings and Functions	23	16	7½
Refund from Berlin Congress	2	10	0
Donation for Advertisement	0	10	0
	£80	2	0

<i>Expenditure.</i>	£	s.	d.
<i>By Payments.</i>			
Rent	66	13	4
Petty Cash Expenditure	9	18	0
Interest on Loan	2	8	0
Advertisement	0	14	3
Balance transferred to League Funds	0	8	5
	£80	2	0

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