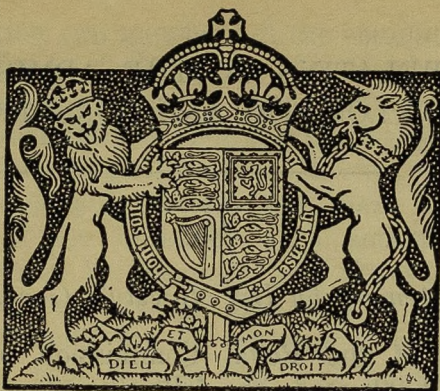


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Miscellaneous No. 5 (1936)

Documents

relating to the

Admission of Women to the Diplomatic and Consular Services

July 30, 1934—April 1936

*Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
to Parliament by Command of His Majesty*

LONDON

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN
TO THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR SERVICES.

No. 1.

Statement by His Majesty's Government.

THE Report of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1929-31 (Cmd. 3909) made the following recommendation in regard to the Diplomatic and Consular Services:—

“415. *Diplomatic and Consular Services.*—In our view the question whether women should be admitted to these services raises issues of high policy which can only be determined by Your Majesty's Government. We note that this matter was reviewed by them at the time of the passing of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. We think that the question should not be regarded as settled for all time by the decision then reached. Having regard to the time which has since elapsed, we recommend that Your Majesty's Government should again examine the position at an early date.”

2. The Royal Commission, therefore, expressed no definite view, but merely enjoined that the question of the admission of women to these services should again be examined. It was, accordingly, the duty of His Majesty's Government to consider whether the general interests of the State would be better served if women were admitted to these two Services or excluded as they are at present. To enable His Majesty's Government the better to decide this question they caused an interdepartmental committee⁽¹⁾ to be set up to advise on the matter, and after careful consideration the Government have decided to adopt the views of the majority of that committee in the case of both the Services in question. In taking this decision His Majesty's Government must not be thought to be questioning the advantage of the employment of women in the Home Civil Service. On the contrary, they fully recognise the services rendered by women in the Civil Service in this country and the advantages which have accrued to the Service by their admission to it. They are, however, convinced that the time has not yet arrived when women could be employed either in the Consular Service or in the Diplomatic Service with advantage to the State or with profit to women. Their reasons for this view are as follows:—

3. To take first the Consular Service. His Majesty's Government have been much impressed by the virtual unanimity of the Committee upon the inadvisability of admitting women to this

(1) See No. 2.

3

Service. It is true that two members of the committee recommended that a test of the fitness of women for this Service should be made by seconding a selected number of women officers from the Home Service to the Consular Service, but the Government feel that they would not be justified in giving effect to such a recommendation unless they were reasonably certain that some definite advantage would be secured to the State by such action. They are not satisfied that this would be the case. In the very large majority of Consular posts officers have to deal with a number of matters which it would be difficult for the average woman to handle, and although it may be that women can and do participate in this country in work of a kind analogous to that of Consular officers, it would be wrong to compare conditions in many foreign countries to those prevailing at home. His Majesty's Government are of the decided opinion that women would in practice find themselves hampered and restricted as compared with men if they endeavoured to carry out Consular duties abroad, with the result that women consular officers would not be able to give such efficient service to the State and to British subjects requiring their assistance as men. In the general interest, therefore, His Majesty's Government find themselves bound to accept the recommendation of the majority of the committee.

4. As regards the Diplomatic Service, on which the views of the committee are more divided, His Majesty's Government have carefully considered the three recommendations in the committee's report and, considering that the true criterion in such a matter must be the interest of the State, they have reached the conclusion that the recommendation signed by four members of the committee should be adopted, namely, that no change should be made in the existing position. To throw the Service open to women without any restriction appears to His Majesty's Government to be, at present at any rate, undesirable. Strong opinion has been expressed that, in view of the habits and customs of many countries, the employment of women in diplomatic work would not prove successful. Admittedly, there can be no proof of this until the experiment is tried, but if the experiment were attempted and proved unsuccessful, His Majesty's Government consider that not only would it be difficult to close an avenue once opened to women, but considerable injustice might be caused to the individual women who had entered the Service. The recommendation proposed by two members of the committee that women should be permitted to enter for a limited period, seems to His Majesty's Government to be open to the serious objection that over so short a period no proper judgment could be formed of the fitness of women for the work of diplomacy. It is likely that over seven years few women would be successful in the examination and it would prove impossible conclusively to test the fitness of women by appointing them in sufficient numbers to those countries where *prima facie* their employment would be undesirable.

5. But, apart from these reasons, His Majesty's Government foresee great difficulties and inconveniences in the employment of women in the Diplomatic Service at present. It must be remembered that an essential element for success in diplomatic life consists in the members of the Service being favourably received in the countries to which they are posted. If they are not so received their usefulness is greatly diminished and their mission is likely to fail. There are, however, many countries where the position of women is very different from what it is in this country. With very few exceptions the experiment has not been made by other countries and His Majesty's Government are satisfied that in a large number of countries the innovation would not be welcomed. His Majesty's Government consider that they would not be justified in risking the efficiency of the Service as a whole in order to give an opportunity to the relatively small number of women who would be likely to find a career in the Diplomatic Service.

6. Marriage also presents a problem of great difficulty. At present a very large proportion of the members of the Service marry and it is universally admitted that the wives of members of the Service contribute very greatly to the success of their husbands' careers. It would hardly be defensible to treat women members of the Diplomatic Service differently in respect of marriage from women in the higher grades of the Civil Service generally, but if women were retained in the Diplomatic Service after marriage, His Majesty's Government feel that insuperable difficulties would ensue. For instance, a woman could not be permitted to remain in the Service if she married a foreigner, and in practically every case it would be impossible for the husband of a woman diplomatic officer to exercise any profession in the country in which his wife was serving.

7. Finally, His Majesty's Government do not consider that any injustice is being done to women by their continued exclusion from the Diplomatic Service. It is, to say the least, doubtful whether women are suited to this Service owing to the conditions prevailing; it is equally doubtful whether the admission of women would contribute any special advantage to the State; lastly, the size of the Service is so small that the general question of the employment of women is in any event hardly affected.

April 1936.

No. 2.

Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Admission of Women to the Diplomatic and Consular Services.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE.

THE Committee was composed as follows :—

Sir CLAUD SCHUSTER (*Chairman*), G.C.B., C.V.O., K.C.—
Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor.

The Rt. Hon. Sir RONALD GRAHAM, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
G.C.V.O.—
Lately His Majesty's Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary at Rome.

Sir RODERICK S. MEIKLEJOHN, K.B.E., C.B.—
First Civil Service Commissioner.

Sir JAMES RAE, K.B.E.—
Under-Secretary, Treasury.

Miss M. RITSON—
Assistant Secretary, Department of Health for Scotland.

Miss H. MARTINDALE, O.B.E.—
Director of Women Establishments, Treasury.

Mr. C. HOWARD SMITH, C.M.G.—
Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office.

Mr. T. D. DUNLOP, C.M.G.—
One of His Majesty's Inspectors-General of Consular Establishments.

Mr. J. W. NICHOLLS (*Secretary*)—
Third Secretary, Foreign Office.

REPORT.

Sir,

Introductory.

1. You appointed us to be a Committee to review the question of the admission of women to the Diplomatic and Consular Services and to furnish a Report thereon for your information.

2. We have met on ten occasions, and have heard the evidence of forty witnesses. Their names, and, where they appeared in a representative capacity, the names of the Societies or other bodies for which they spoke, are set out in Appendix I to this Report. We have also had before us a number of written statements, including reports and letters from the Heads of all His Majesty's Embassies and Legations abroad. We have considered, also, the evidence given on this subject before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1929-31).

3. Much of the evidence tendered to us was directed to the habit of mind and the social customs of foreign Governments and countries, and was in itself of a confidential nature. Those who gave both oral and written evidence did so with the knowledge that it would be regarded as confidential, and spoke more freely by reason of this circumstance. We recommend therefore that whatever decision may be taken as to the publication of our Report, the records of evidence and the written statements submitted to us should not be made public.

Historical Summary.

4. The history of this matter up to the time of the appointment of your Committee may be summarised as follows:—

5. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919 (9 and 10 Geo. V, c. 71), so far as material, enacted that "a person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post . . . provided that (a) notwithstanding anything in this section, His Majesty may by Order in Council authorise regulations to be made providing for and prescribing the mode of the admission of women to the Civil Service of His Majesty, and the conditions on which women admitted to that service may be appointed to or continue to hold posts therein, and giving power to reserve to men any branch of or posts in the Civil Service in any of His Majesty's possessions overseas, or in any foreign country."

6. By an Order in Council of the 22nd July, 1920, which recited another Order in Council of the same date relating to the manner in which persons are to be admitted to His Majesty's Civil establishments, and to the control of the conduct of those establishments, as well as the section of the Act of 1919 which is summarised above, it was in effect provided that the powers of the Civil Service Commissioners "shall include power to make special regulations providing for, and prescribing the mode of, the admission of women to the Civil Service, and regulations reserving to men any branch of or posts in the Civil Service in any of His Majesty's possessions overseas, or in any foreign country."

7. Accordingly, the Civil Service Commissioners gave notice (the 23rd August, 1921, Cmd. 1244) "that, with the approval of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, they make the following regulations under the Order in Council of the 22nd July, 1920:—

"1. (On behalf of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs):—
"all posts in the Diplomatic Service and in the Consular Service are reserved to men."

* * * * *

"4. (On behalf of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the President of the Board of Trade):—

"All posts in the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Trade Commissioner Service are reserved to men, provided that this reservation is not applicable to the post of Chief Clerk in the respective Offices of His Majesty's Trade Commissioners."

8. The MacDonnell Commission, that is the signatories to the Fourth (Majority) Report of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1912-15), presided over by Lord MacDonnell, reported that, "in connexion with the employment of women . . . the object should be, not to provide employment for women as such, but to secure for the State the advantage of the services of women whenever those services will best promote its interests."

9. The Tomlin Commission, that is, the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1929-31) presided over by Lord Tomlin, again considered the question of the employment of women, both generally in the Civil Service and particularly in what may be called the closed branches of the Service.

10. They reported as follows:—

"Paragraph 398. Speaking generally, we hold that the best course is to adopt what has been called the policy of 'a fair field and no favour.' We think that so far as possible all posts in the Service should be open to men and women. We are, however, agreed that it is neither practicable nor desirable to

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abolish all the existing reservations of posts to men or women, and that the 'fair field and no favour' must be subject to modification in regard to those areas of the Service in which the reservation of certain posts to men or to women is demanded in the public interest, or where it is necessary to employ a certain minimum proportion of men or women in each grade."

"399. The adoption of the policy of 'a fair field and no favour' is sometimes opposed on the ground, which admittedly exists, that men are likely to prove more suitable than women for certain posts, and *vice versa*. In present circumstances, and until men and women have had opportunities of working side by side, we do not think that, in regard to many occupations, anyone can forecast the posts for which a man or a woman is likely to prove better suited. This is a matter which can only be decided in the light of the experience to be gained by employing men and women together. Again, it is true that there are certain types of work for which few women are at present likely to possess the necessary qualifications. But we do not think that on this account women should be ineligible as candidates."

"400. It was also represented to us that it was inadvisable to employ women in certain posts at the present time by reason of the alleged existence of prejudice against them. We do not regard this as sufficient justification for excluding women, since the prejudice, if it exists, can only be combated by giving women an opportunity of overcoming it. We agree, however, that in such cases it may often be desirable to proceed cautiously at the outset."

"401. We regard the question of which posts in the Service should be reserved to one sex or the other as one which is not capable of determination once and for all, but falls to be decided in the light of the conditions and requirements obtaining from time to time."

11. They then proceeded "to indicate in broad outline" the posts which they recommended should continue to be reserved to men and the posts then reserved to men which should be thrown open to women.

12. When, in making this dichotomy, they came to deal with the Diplomatic and Consular Services, they reported as follows:—

"415. In our view, the question whether women should be admitted to these Services raises issues of high policy, which can only be determined by Your Majesty's Government. We note that this matter was reviewed by them at the time of the passage of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. We think that the question should not be regarded as settled for all time by the decision then reached. Having regard to the time which has since elapsed, we recommend that Your Majesty's Government should again examine the position at an early date."

13. We concur in the view expressed by the Tomlin Commission that the question of the admission of women to these Services raises issues of high policy, and we realise that His Majesty's Government, in deciding it, must have in mind political considerations which cannot fall within the purview of a Committee composed wholly of those who have served, or are still serving, in the capacity of Civil Servants. We shall, therefore, in this Report, endeavour to confine ourselves to a discussion of the practical advantages or disadvantages of the admission of women, though it is not wholly possible, in weighing those advantages and disadvantages, to abstain from some allusion to considerations which may be regarded as in part political.

Diplomatic and Consular Services.

14. The Diplomatic and Consular Services are closely inter-related. There are frequent contacts during the career between the diplomatist and the consul, and there are to-day six Ministers and one Ambassador who began their careers in the Consular Service. Consular officers are under the general superintendence of the appropriate Diplomatic Mission. The Consular Service is under the direction of the Comptroller-General of the Department of Overseas Trade, and is administered by a Department of the Foreign Office, which is presided over by a member of the Foreign Office staff, and is staffed in part by consuls. Furthermore, the object of the employment of both Services is in broad outline the same, namely, the representation of His Majesty's Government in foreign parts, the protection of His Majesty's subjects, and the furtherance of British trade. But though these contacts are frequent and these objects are identical, there are broad differences between the two Services, and it appears to us desirable in this Report to consider each Service separately.

The Diplomatic Service and Foreign Office.

15. The Diplomatic Service and service in the Foreign Office form one unified service. Entrance to it is by one examination, and the successful candidate incurs an obligation to serve either at home or abroad as from time to time the exigencies of the Service may require. This obligation is not merely theoretical, but practical. The ordinary career for an entrant consists, in the first place, of a period of service in the Foreign Office of one or two years, followed by frequent interchanges to foreign capitals, with occasional returns to service at home. It may well be that at a certain period in the career it tends to take a home or a foreign bias. But even to the very end of the career there may be an interchange from the one branch of the Service to the other, so that persons of high rank in the Foreign Office not infrequently become ambassadors or ministers abroad, and an ambassador or minister may become Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Thus the two branches

of the Service must be looked upon as one, and, in considering the advantage or disadvantage of the employment of women, account must be taken of the fact that any woman admitted to the Service must be equally available for work both at home and abroad.

16. The examination by which entrance is obtained to the Service corresponds with that by which candidates for the administrative class of the Civil Service and candidates for the Indian Civil Service are obtained. And in practice, since this method of recruitment has been employed, the quality of those successful for the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service on the one hand, and the Home Civil Service on the other, has proved to be about equal—the successful candidate towards the top of the list, choosing at his own will between the two Services. In order, however, that he may be in a position to select employment in the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, he has to pass a barrier and to undertake a task additional to those imposed upon candidates for the Home Civil Service. He is, in the first place, subjected before he enters for the examination to a preliminary interview, at which he may be rejected on his personal qualities as they appear to the examiners. This interview may take place at any time after the candidate's 19th birthday, and usually takes place some two or three years before he takes the examination. He has also to qualify in French, and is obliged to offer German and a period of Modern History.

17. Candidates must have attained the age of 22, and must not have attained the age of 25 on the 1st August in the year when the examination is held.

18. The authorized establishment of the Diplomatic Service and Foreign Office together is 205, of whom 66 are employed in the Foreign Office and 139 in posts abroad. This excludes persons employed on technical and clerical duties both at home and abroad, and such consuls and persons employed on special posts as work in the Foreign Office; it excludes also Financial Advisers, Commercial Diplomatic Officers, and Naval, Military and Air Attachés employed in Missions abroad.

19. The normal staff of a Mission abroad may be comparatively numerous, as in Washington and Paris, or very small as in La Paz. At Washington there are normally an Ambassador, a Minister, one First Secretary, two Second Secretaries, a Third Secretary (and at present also two Honorary Attachés), as well as a Financial Adviser, a Commercial Counsellor, a Commercial Secretary, an Honorary Commercial Secretary, two Naval Attachés, a Military and an Air Attaché, and thirteen Accountants, Archivists, Clerks, Registrars and Shorthand Typists. In Paris the staff comprises an Ambassador, a Minister, a First Secretary, two Second Secretaries, a Third Secretary, two Honorary Attachés, a Press Attaché, a Commercial Counsellor, a Commercial Secretary, a Naval Attaché and his

Assistant, a Military Attaché and an Air Attaché, together with three Archivists and eight Clerks or Shorthand Typists. On the other hand, the Mission to Bolivia consists only of a Minister, who is also Consul-General, a Vice-Consul with the local rank of Second Secretary, and a Clerical Assistant; that to Colombia consists of a Minister, a Consul, an Archivist, and a Shorthand Typist; that to Cuba of a Minister, a Consul-General with the local rank of Second Secretary, and an Archivist and Typist. Speaking broadly, in the majority of Legations, there is employed, in addition to the Minister and exclusive of persons holding special posts, not more than one official holding the rank of First, Second or Third Secretary. Where the staff is very small, as in the cases of which those mentioned above are only examples, there cannot be any strict differentiation of work between the persons employed on the diplomatic side, as is no doubt the case in the larger Embassies. Furthermore, we are informed that in any of these cases it frequently happens that the First, Second or even Third Secretary has to take charge of a Mission during the illness or absence on leave of his Chief.

20. It is extremely difficult to state in summary form the duties which, where an exact differentiation of work is possible, fall to be performed by each member of the diplomatic staff. They may be divided roughly between those to be performed in the Chancery of the Embassy or Legation, such as the compilation of information both as to the political and commercial situation in the country to which the Mission is accredited, and the drafting of despatches to the Foreign Office and of notes to the foreign government concerned on the one hand, and, on the other, contacts, both formal and informal, with the representatives of that government and with its officials, and with the staffs of other Missions resident in the same capital. As might reasonably have been expected, all the information supplied to us tends to show the great importance of the informal as well as the formal intercourse with the inhabitants of the country and the need, therefore, for the possession of social gifts.

21. We have thought it unnecessary to give a detailed summary of the evidence submitted by many witnesses in regard to the work which has been performed by women in the past and which women are undertaking at the present moment. His Majesty's Government, for whose assistance this Report is prepared, are as well aware as we are of the immense services rendered by women at home and abroad. That there are women who can perform difficult work similar to that which falls to the lot of the diplomatist is undisputed and indisputable. We take note not only of the eminent capacity but of the devotion—sometimes to public duty, sometimes to religious or philanthropic causes—with which women have served throughout the world, often at the peril and, on occasion, at the loss of their lives. In the following paragraphs we have merely confined ourselves to a summary of the arguments addressed to us in favour of and against the admission of women to the Service.

Arguments for the Admission of Women.

22. The arguments addressed to us in favour of the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service may be summarised as follows:—

(a) The general policy of Parliament and of successive Governments, as embodied in the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, appears to be that described by the Tomlin Commission in the passage already quoted in this Report as a policy of "a fair field and no favour." The governing principle is that stated in the opening words of the first section of that Act. "A person shall not be disqualified by sex from being appointed to or holding any civil office"; and the fact that the rights so conferred can only be cut down where His Majesty authorises regulations to be made reserving to men posts abroad suggests that those who desire to maintain such a reservation should show good cause for making, or, when (as in this case) it is already imposed, retaining it.

(b) Most of those who appeared before us as advocates of the change laid stress upon the capacity of women generally to discharge duties of all kinds which some years ago would have been thought impossible of performance by them, and, in particular, duties analogous in kind to those discharged by the Diplomatic Service.

(c) In the evidence given to us, the value of the work done by women in connexion with the League of Nations was cited as an indication of their aptitude for the work of diplomacy.

(d) Next it is said that to open the Service to women is to increase the field from which candidates can be taken, and thereby to improve the quality of the Service. Candidates are for the most part drawn from those who have received a University education, and the number of women receiving such an education is so much smaller than the number of men that the effect of opening the door cannot be expected to produce an equal number of candidates from both sexes. The admission of any section of the population, to whom entrance is at present denied, must necessarily offer a wider field of selection.

(e) Several witnesses claimed that women have a peculiar contribution of their own to make to any kind of work, and particularly to the work of diplomacy. So long as they are totally excluded from it, there is a danger that the women's point of view may be forgotten. Furthermore, there are, it was said, in many foreign countries definite signs of what are called "women's movements," and it is suggested that these are exercising in many countries an increasing influence, direct or indirect, upon the policy of those countries. It is claimed that women rather than men are likely to be able, through their intercourse with other women, and their contact with women's societies, to discover more readily what is going on, and to appreciate it at its true value.

(f) Instances were recited to us of the employment by foreign Governments of women in diplomatic positions, and evidence was offered to the effect that at least some of the women so employed

have proved successful. This was adduced as proof, both that women can successfully do work of this nature, and also that in certain foreign countries there would be no obstacle to the employment of British women for this purpose.

(g) Generally speaking, it is said, the objections to the admission of women to the Service are based in part on prejudice, and in part on fear of the unknown. Similar arguments have been used in the past to justify the exclusion of women from every kind of service, both public and private, and have been proved by experience to be baseless. There may be certain difficulties peculiar to this particular Service, but there is no reason to suppose that they will prove insuperable. No doubt the first few women employed abroad will encounter obstacles, and will be looked upon with curiosity by the inhabitants of the country in which they are appointed to serve. But this will pass away.

Arguments against the Admission of Women.

23. The arguments addressed to us on the other side may be thus summarised:—

(a) Conditions abroad, as regards the employment of women, appear somewhat less favourable now than in the year 1931, when the Tomlin Commission were not prepared to do more than recommend that the position should be reviewed at an early date. The question at issue is not the suitability of the exceptional woman for a selected post. The doubt is whether the average woman entering by competitive examination would now be as efficient as the average man at the average post. The real question is whether the specific considerations of the efficiency of the foreign services, and the advice of the representative commercial bodies making use of those services, outweigh the general desirability of opening another avenue of employment to educated women at present. The Diplomatic Service is, as stated above, a unified Service, every member of which must be prepared to go everywhere when called upon. Before 1919, the Foreign Office was separate from the Diplomatic Service, and experience has shown that the amalgamation of the two Services has immensely increased efficiency. Any step which might tend to divorce the two Services is therefore to be strongly deprecated. It is admitted that for work at the Foreign Office women might be as efficient as men. But service abroad is another matter; and it is this that differentiates the Diplomatic Service from any branch of the Home Civil Service. For there are countries where the social habits, the political conceptions and the religious beliefs, both of the official classes and of the population at large, are so fundamentally different from those prevailing in this country that women are not, at least as yet, regarded in a light which would make it possible for them to be employed as diplomatic officers. In those countries, it would be extremely difficult for a woman to make the contacts which form a large part of the work of diplomacy; and she would

find it impossible to live on easy terms with those with whom her work necessarily associated her. The employment of women in these countries would not increase, and in some cases would definitely decrease, the influence of the British missions accredited to them. Even if nothing more than surprise were evinced if a woman were appointed as third secretary to His Majesty's Embassy or Legation, there would be a very different feeling if the British Chargé d'Affaires, in the absence of the Ambassador or Minister, happened to be a woman, as might well, indeed must, be the case after a few years' service. It is feared that her position would then be regarded as ridiculous, and might even be resented by the Government to which she was accredited.

(b) The introduction of a woman diplomatic officer into the very intimate life of missions abroad would cause difficulties. It is hard to convey a clear picture of life in a Chancery abroad, but it will not be disputed that, in order to ensure efficiency, it is necessary that the staff should work together on terms of the closest intimacy. A young woman would not easily fit into the part. It would not be easy to exercise over her the discipline at present exercised over the junior secretaries employed there. In addition, the junior secretaries have either to live alone, which would excite undesirable comment in the case of a young woman, or at some missions, if they are unmarried, to share small Government-owned houses, which would be embarrassing unless the other partner were also a woman. Emphasis was laid on the small number of foreign countries in which sex equality prevails to the extent that women mix and work freely with men, and occupy leading positions in Government offices, commerce, industry, shipping and banking.

(c) Work in a British mission abroad must from time to time involve long hours, great strain and anxiety. Many missions—particularly some of the smaller ones—are situated in capitals in very hot climates. Some few capitals are situated at altitudes so great as to impose a strain upon health. The physical constitution of women is not such as to enable them to bear the strain of continuous overwork in hot and unhealthy climates.

(d) It is said, therefore, that there are so many posts to which women could not be sent, that certain parts of the world—and those perhaps the most desirable from the point of view of social amenity—would tend to be reserved for women, as from the time when women had entered the Service in any number. Such a condition of things would make the working of the official machine impossible. Not only would it not result in the "fair field and no favour" for which demand is made, but it would mean that the men would have to take more than their fair share of the less comfortable posts, while the women would become, in fact, a privileged class, who would tend more and more to serve only in the Foreign Office and the easier and more comfortable posts abroad. This would cut across the basis of the amalgamation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service of 1919, and might lead eventually to

the re-establishment of two separate services, which, for the reason urged under (a) above, is quite unacceptable in the public interests.

(e) It is argued that the contribution which women are particularly fitted to make to the general work of a diplomatic mission abroad, in connexion, for instance, with social and philanthropic duties and the observance of women's movements, is now adequately performed by wives and daughters of members of the Service without any cost to the State.

(f) The entrance of women into the Service must necessarily involve a certain amount of disturbance, and, at least at the outset, must involve on any view a certain loss of efficiency. It is not worth while to incur such a disturbance and such a loss of efficiency, unless there is an obvious demand for admission on the part of women, and a strong probability that women will present themselves in sufficient numbers to the examination, and achieve success in it in reasonable numbers. There is no evidence of any pronounced demand, except from societies such as those whose representatives have given evidence before us, and there is no evidence that there exists any substantial number of women who are willing and able to enter for the examination and succeed in it. Indeed, reference to the examination by which admission is obtained to the administrative class of the Home Civil Service, and which was thrown open to women in 1925, shows that the number of women presenting themselves for it and the number successful are small, and have decreased in recent years. No woman has been successful in the last three examinations. A table showing the number of men and women entering for and successful at the examination is attached in Appendix II.

Conclusions on the Diplomatic Service.

24. We regret that we have been unable to reach agreement on this matter.

Some of us (Sir Ronald Graham, Sir Roderick Meiklejohn, Mr. Howard Smith and Mr. Dunlop) hold that the arguments against the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service definitely outweigh those in favour. These members therefore recommend no change in the existing position.

On the other hand, Miss Martindale and Miss Ritson hold a contrary view, and recommend that women should be eligible for admission to the Diplomatic Service on the same terms as men.

The two remaining members of the Committee (Sir Claud Schuster and Sir James Rae) are in favour of admitting women to the Diplomatic Service for a limited period as an experimental measure.

The views of each group are set out as addenda to our report.

The Consular Service.

25. We pass now to the consideration of the problem as it affects the Consular Service. That Service consists of two distinct bodies

of men. First, the career consular officers—that is, those who have entered the Service by examination with the intention of making it a life career and who are remunerated on regular rates of pay, and who, if efficient, proceed in regular channels of promotion. Secondly, unsalaried officers, chosen for the most part from among those engaged in commercial life in the place concerned. These latter are not whole-time officials, and they receive, as a rule, no personal remuneration. They frequently combine the appointment of Lloyd's Agent with that of consul. There are 347 of these honorary posts. No question arises here about the appointment of women to this latter class, and the observations which follow relate therefore only to the career service.

26. The staff of the regular Consular Service numbers 346, exclusive of clerical staff. It is, or was until recently, divided into three groups—the General, with 156 members; the Levant, with 82 members; and the Far Eastern, with 108 members; and the Far Eastern group is sub-divided into three further groups—the China (63 members), the Japan (25 members), and the Siam (20 members) Services. Each of these groups is, or was, a Service in itself, and anyone entering it remained in it as a rule for his whole career, unless he passed a period of employment in the Foreign Office or was promoted to the Inspectorate.

27. The Service is now in course of a reorganisation which will apply to entrants into it after the 1st August, 1934. Under it, all the groups enumerated above, except the China Service, will be amalgamated into one Service, entrants into which will be liable to be called upon to serve in any part of the world. The China Service will, for the present at any rate, remain separate. The amalgamation will apply only to future entrants, and will not directly affect those already serving, although it has been laid down that more frequent opportunities should be taken to move present members of the Service from one branch to another. But the difficulties of Oriental and Slavonic languages are so great that it has now been arranged to post all new entrants for at least their first year in one of the present areas of the Levant, Japan and Siam Services to study the local language or languages; and they will almost certainly be called upon to pass some at least of their later years in the area in which they started their career. It should be added that some of the consular posts in Persia and Afghanistan are staffed by officers drawn from the Indian Political Service, and some of those in Ethiopia by officers lent by the Sudan and Kenya Governments. These officers are not included in the figures quoted above.

28. Generally speaking, the evidence given before us was directed towards the advantages or disadvantages of the admission of women to both the Diplomatic and Consular Services; and though it is true that certain witnesses on both sides laid more emphasis on one or the other of the two Services, the general tenour of the evidence regarding the Consular Service was so similar to that regarding the

Diplomatic Service that the analysis of the latter given in paragraphs 22 and 23 of this Report may be considered equally applicable to the former. We propose, therefore, to proceed direct to a consideration of the circumstances which, in our view, differentiate the Consular from the Diplomatic Service. We are all agreed that such circumstances exist, but Miss Martindale and Miss Ritson desire to record separately in their Addendum to this Report their views in regard to the admission of women to the Consular Service. The following paragraphs, therefore, set out the views of the other members of the Committee.

29. The work of the Consular Service is performed in circumstances of less dignity, greater loneliness and greater discomfort than that of the Diplomatic Service. It is also more varied, both potentially and in fact. A young vice-consul may find himself, through the absence or illness of the British Minister, in charge of the interests of His Majesty in the country in which he is serving. He habitually takes charge of his post when his senior officer is absent. He may on occasion, in times of physical or political convulsion, have to discharge a heavy, though undefined, responsibility. But his ordinary duties, though miscellaneous, are more humdrum. He has to advance the interests of British trade and to afford protection and help to His Majesty's subjects when in difficulty. This involves the collection of information on any matter in his area which may be of interest to the trader and, if he is stationed at a port, the discharge of a number of duties under the Merchant Shipping Act, the signing on of crews, the care and repatriation of distressed seamen, and general assistance in the numerous questions, some of which are troublesome, which may arise while a ship is in port. He has authority to grant passports and visas. He may be authorised to perform the ceremony of marriage under the Foreign Marriages Act. If he is stationed in a country to which the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts have been applied, he may have to exercise the office of the judge. Many of these duties are pure routine. But even the simplest may, and often do, raise questions of great difficulty, and may involve him in awkward and even dangerous situations. The feature common to all, or nearly all, is that they bring him into contact with commercial men of all classes and types, including his own countrymen, and with seafaring men of every rank, race and colour. During a large part of his career he works unsupported by the presence of a colleague. And the great majority of the posts open to him are in trying climates.

30. The persons among whom consuls have to work are less likely than the society of a capital city to have felt the influence of modern ideas on the position of a woman. This is true not only of the inhabitants of the town where the consul is stationed, but also of his own countrymen. Seafaring men are of somewhat conservative habit of mind (using that term in a non-political sense). The rough population of the dockside does not offer the most fruitful

field for an experiment of this nature. And we must take note of the expressed reluctance of those associated with the management of Lloyd's, as well as that of the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, and of the Officers' (Merchant Navy) Federation, to accept women as consular officers. The organisations representing commercial opinion share this view.

31. It is relevant in this connexion to point out that the Tomlin Commission held that "the time was not ripe for the appointment of women officers of Customs and Excise," and that "the water-guard service and allied posts should continue to be reserved to men" (paragraph 410). The Commission also included among the categories of non-industrial posts now reserved to men which should continue to be so reserved, "sea-going posts and posts connected with port administration."

We have also been informed by the Admiralty that, having regard to the duties likely to devolve on consular officers in certain ports in time of war, the Lords Commissioners think that it would be most unsuitable that women should be admitted to the Consular Service. It should also be recorded that, under the Merchant Shipping Acts, consular officers have at times to act as Presidents of Naval Courts.

Out of the 196 posts at which officers of the regular service are stationed, 120 are at seaports. We should regard the facts set out in this paragraph, even if they stood alone, as a very weighty argument against the admission of women to the Consular Service at the present time.

32. In spite of the cases which we have already noticed of women who have served in circumstances of danger, and in countries either uncivilised or peculiarly liable to disturbances, we cannot exclude from our consideration the fact that when disturbances occur which are thought to menace the lives or property of British subjects, the normal course is to evacuate women and children and, so far as possible, to retain men at their posts. It is not possible to contemplate a situation in which a woman consul should be so retained while the rest of her sex are sent to a place of security. Women are no less reluctant than men to withdraw in the face of danger, and the embarrassments which arise to those responsible in such a situation are sufficient as they are without the addition of this new element. Again, though the cases may be rare where women are exposed, in cases of disturbance, to dangers peculiar to their sex, still they do exist. The duty of deciding what officer should be appointed to posts of particular danger is already sufficiently onerous, without adding to it the obligation to send a woman to a solitary post to which some risk attaches, in pursuance of the policy of "a fair field and no favour."

33. The objections on the ground of health, if valid, apply with greater force in the Consular Service. There are more posts in proportion to the total strength which are not only in the tropics, but are definitely unhealthy. And the conditions of the consul's

work do not always allow absence on leave or a transfer to healthier surroundings in the bad season of the year. Until more authoritative conclusions can be reached on the comparative powers of resistance of men and women in unhealthy surroundings, we think that it would be imprudent to expose women to these risks.

34. For the reasons set out above we are, with the exception of Miss Martindale and Miss Ritson, agreed that it would be inadvisable to admit women to the Consular Service.

35. We wish to make it clear that the effect of this recommendation is not to close the Consular Service to women for all time. We are concerned only with the situation as it is to-day, and we are satisfied that in the present state of public opinion, both in this country and abroad, the admission of women to the Consular Service would result in harm to the efficiency of the Service. We think that it would also tend to prejudice the position which the women's societies wish to advance.

36. On the other hand, if the women's movement should continue to gain ground, classes of the population as yet unaffected will become accustomed to the idea of the employment of women in spheres at present closed to them. In that event the matter can be reconsidered in the light of the circumstances then existing.

37. In conclusion, we wish to place on record our appreciation of the manner in which Mr. J. W. Nicholls has discharged his duties as Secretary. The Committee's labours have been sensibly lightened by the tact, resourcefulness and energy displayed by him.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

CLAUD SCHUSTER, *Chairman.*

T. D. DUNLOP.

RONALD GRAHAM.

HILDA MARTINDALE.

RODERICK MEIKLEJOHN.

JAMES RAE.

MURIEL RITSON.

C. HOWARD SMITH.

J. W. NICHOLLS (*Secretary*).

July 30, 1934.

The Right Honourable

Sir John Simon, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., M.P., &c.,

His Majesty's Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs.

APPENDIX I TO THE REPORT.

LIST of persons who gave oral evidence, in the order in which they appeared before the Committee :—

1. The Dowager Lady Nunburnholme, Mrs. Keynes and Mrs. Hartree—representing the National Council of Women of the United Kingdom.
2. The Viscountess Astor, M.P.
3. Miss M. Graves, M.P.
4. The late Honourable Mary Pickford, M.P.
5. The Honourable Dame Edith Lyttelton, G.B.E.
6. Miss Wodehouse (Mistress of Girton College), Miss J. P. Strachey (Principal of Newnham College) and Miss Campbell (Secretary)—representing the Cambridge University Women's Appointments Board.
7. Miss M. G. Clarke (Head Mistress of Manchester High School for Girls) and Miss G. Addison Phillips (formerly Head Mistress of Clifton High School for Girls)—representing the Association of Head Mistresses.
8. Mrs. Laughton Matthews, M.B.E.—representing St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.
9. Miss Grier (Principal of Lady Margaret Hall)—representing the Women's Sub-Committee of the Oxford University Appointments Committee.
10. Sir H. G. Chilton, G.C.M.G. (His Majesty's Ambassador at Buenos Aires).
11. Mrs. Oliver Strachey, Miss P. Strachey and Miss D. Brown—representing the London and National Society for Women's Service.
12. Miss M. F. Yates (formerly Archivist at His Majesty's Legation at Havana).
13. Mrs. V. MacDonnell (widow of the late Consul-General Errol MacDonnell).
14. Mrs. I. Smedley MacClean, D.Sc., F.I.C., Mrs. Omerod and Mrs. Spedan-Lewis—representing the Federation of University Women (Limited).
15. Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence (President) and Miss Underwood (Secretary)—representing the Women's Freedom League.
16. The Countess Granville.
17. Mr. R. C. S. Stevenson (Foreign Office).
18. Miss Ruth Fry.
19. Mr. W. A. J. Boxford (Clerk to the Committee of Lloyd's and Controller of Lloyd's Agencies).
20. Miss A. Ford, Miss J. I. Wall and Miss A. H. M. Kilroy—representing the Council of Women Civil Servants.
21. Sir Gerald Talbot, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., O.B.E. (nominated by the Chairman of the Federation of British Industries).

22. Mr. D. J. M. D. Scott and Mr. G. T. Maclean (Head of the Consular Department of the Foreign Office and Inspector-General of Consular Establishments respectively).
23. Lady Barrett, C.H., C.B.E., M.B., B.Sc., and Dr. Agnes Scott, C.B.E.—representing the Medical Women's Federation.
24. Viscount Cecil of Chelwood.
25. Dr. A. T. Stanton, C.M.G., and Dr. P. Manson-Bahr, Medical Advisers to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

APPENDIX II TO THE REPORT.

Administrative Class Open Competition.

Date of Competition.	Total Number Attending.	Number of Women Attending.	Total Number Appointed.	Number of Women Appointed.
1925	107	27	22	3
1926	118	12	23	1
1927	121	14	9	...
1928	122	11	18	2
1929	119	10	24	1
1930	119	9	26	2
1931	161	15	18	...
1932	158	6	19	...
1933	114	6	29	...

In the nine years during which the examination has been open to women, 110 have competed, of whom 9 have succeeded.

ADDENDUM I TO THE REPORT.

Recommendations of Sir Claud Schuster and Sir James Rae in Favour of the Admission of Women to the Diplomatic Service for a Limited Period as an Experimental Measure.

THE arguments summarised in paragraph 23 of our Report against the admission of women derive great weight from the authority and position of those who adduce them. All the heads of British Missions abroad affirm with different degrees of emphasis their reasoned opposition to the change, resting their case on all or some of the contentions already set out. They are supported in their views by some at least of those who have had occasion to make use of the services of His Majesty's representatives, and by those wives of diplomatists who have offered evidence either orally or in writing.

2. This testimony from those who have practical experience in the life of an Embassy or a Legation and of the attitude of mind of foreign societies and Governments, is entitled to be received with respect and treated seriously. On the other hand, influential evidence has been received in favour of the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service. Weight must be attached to the cases referred to in our Report of women who have laboured abroad in difficult circumstances. There is also the evidence of those who have been associated with the operations at Geneva, and who have borne testimony to the excellent work done there by women. It is impossible to ignore the desire, which is alleged to be expressed on behalf of a large section of the population to be allowed to take their due share in the discharge of this public service. Furthermore, the objections urged, though put forward with evident sincerity and supported by knowledge of the field and practical experience of the work, do not differ in kind from those advanced when on previous occasions new activities have been opened to women. Those objections were based on conjecture and have for the most part been proved to be without foundation. It appears to us that on general grounds those who now advocate this fresh advance have established a *prima facie* case to have their theories put to the test. We proceed, therefore, to an examination of those difficulties in the employment of women which are alleged to be peculiar to, or at any rate inherent in, the Service under review.

Health.

3. It is appropriate here to refer to the subject of health. The relative capability of men and women to endure strain and long

hours has frequently been discussed, when the fitness of women to undertake some particular type of work was under consideration. The subject is, however, of special importance in a Service which entails residence abroad, and in which a considerable proportion of posts are situated in hot climates or at high altitudes.

We had hoped that it would be possible to arrive at some definite conclusion, on the basis of expert evidence, on this question whether women's efficiency would suffer more than that of men from unhealthy climates and excessive altitudes; but the evidence available was meagre and somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the wives of officials in tropical countries, if opportunity and financial circumstances permit, almost always spend the most unhealthy seasons of the year in better surroundings, and seem to suffer in health if they do not. Such statistics as can be compiled of the comparative sickness rates of men and women in the Colonial Service, where on the whole the age range of employment is such as might be expected to produce more favourable results for women than for men, seem to point the same way. On the other hand, there is the experience of women missionaries, medical women and others, who have laboured through many successive years, in very trying climates and in very uncomfortable surroundings. It was suggested to us that the high incidence of sickness among the wives of serving officials in the tropics, as compared with that among women employed in definite occupations, was due to the fact that the former are unemployed and find time heavy on their hands, and it was alleged that the increase of various avenues of employment for women is at least coincident with and may be a predisposing cause of the marked general improvement of health among the female population.

The evidence did not lead us to any confident conclusion. It has not, however, entirely dispelled the fear that, in present conditions, the majority of women are less inured than the majority of men to the hardships of excessive heat, cold and altitude, and that, even among those who have passed the ordinary medical examination on admission, a higher proportion of women than of men may prove unequal to the physical strain. But we regard the testimony on this point as too vague and conflicting to form any firm basis for or against the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service.

Marriage Bar.

4. Much of the evidence on this controversial subject covered wider issues than those referred to us. Thus, some of those who assisted us with their evidence discussed the marriage bar as it exists in the Home Civil Service, and the effect of its continuance or abrogation on the service of women in diplomacy. The representatives of the women's societies were opposed on principle to the continuance of the marriage bar.

It is neither necessary, nor would it be appropriate, for us to deal here with these wider issues. We have approached our task upon the footing that the marriage bar exists, and that in future its enforcement will be determined by the exigencies of the Service. We assume that, if women are admitted to the Diplomatic Service, the same rule will be applied. We feel bound, however, to add that we think that special difficulties would attach to the continued employment after marriage of a woman in the Diplomatic Service; and that it may be expected that the bar would be enforced more rigorously in that Service than in the Home Civil Service.

If the rule is further relaxed for the Home Service, special consideration may therefore be required before any such relaxation affects foreign service. This, however, is not in our judgment a consideration which materially affects the question whether women should be admitted to the Diplomatic Service.

Public Opinion in Foreign Countries.

5. In our view, by far the most weighty argument against the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service is derived from the fact that it is a unified Service, every member of which must be prepared to go to any post when called upon. We accept the view that there must be no serious limitation of this essential condition of service, even though this should involve the exclusion of women from the Service.

On the one hand we are satisfied that there are many capitals where the employment of women diplomatists would not be unacceptable to the opinion of the country; on the other hand, there are a handful of posts (possibly two or three in number) which we think would be almost universally regarded as wholly unsuitable for women in present conditions. Between these two groups there is a large number of capitals in regard to which the evidence is conflicting. It may be accepted that a woman diplomatist, if appointed to most of these capitals, would encounter some degree of prejudice or opposition at the outset. This, however, has been the common lot of women when entering activities hitherto closed to them. We think it is impossible to say in advance how the employment of a woman diplomat would be regarded at these doubtful capitals until there is some practical experience on which to base an opinion.

6. We wish to emphasise that, in our view, the position in regard to these doubtful posts is the crucial point of the whole matter. If experience were to show that it was impossible to employ women at a large number of these doubtful posts, then we should regard the employment of women in the Diplomatic Service as contrary to the public interest, on the ground that their employment was inconsistent with the overriding condition of interchangeability throughout the Service. If, on the other hand, it was found that women could be

employed at all or nearly all these doubtful posts, then we should regard the main ground of objection to the employment of women in the Service as removed.

Proposal for an Experimental Period.

7. We have therefore reached the conclusion that the factors necessary for a proper judgment of this question are lacking, and that in the present state of opinion no reliable forecast can be made of the results of opening the Service to women.

In these circumstances the change is one which must be regarded as attended by some risk; a risk, moreover, which would be greater than was the case when the higher grades of the Civil Service were opened to women. If, in the latter case, the women admitted to the Service had failed to make good, the failure would at worst have produced a partial inefficiency with no very serious consequences. Each mission abroad, on the other hand, is so small, and is in so marked a degree an object of attention in the capital in which it is situated, that a definite failure in one of its staff would be bound to have more serious consequences than would be the case in the Home Civil Service.

8. We have therefore considered whether means can be devised whereby experience can be gained of the employment of women in the Diplomatic Service before a final decision is reached on this question. We think that this can be done by admitting women to the Diplomatic Service for an experimental period. The essential features of the scheme which we have in mind are as follows:—

9. In the first place, the main purpose of the experiment is to test whether men and women can be employed on equal terms in a unified Diplomatic Service. It is therefore essential that the women to be admitted under this scheme should be employed in the Service on the same terms as men. For this reason, we reject the suggestion that special posts should be created for women at certain selected capitals, either as an addition to or in substitution for opening the Service generally to women. The appointment of women to special posts of this kind would not afford any true test of the advantages or disadvantages which it is claimed would result from the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service. Further, it runs counter to the accepted principle of "a fair field and no favour," and it would not satisfy the demand made by the women's societies.

10. In the second place it is of the utmost importance that the trial period should provide information as to the number of diplomatic posts to which women can be appointed. This purpose would be defeated if women were to be employed only at those posts where it is generally agreed that their appointment would arouse no serious objection. It should, therefore, be an essential feature of

the experimental period that the posts to which women should be appointed should consist mainly of the posts which we have described in paragraph 5 as "doubtful posts."

11. In the third place, women should be admitted to the competition for entry to the Service on precisely the same terms as men. We do not favour a "quota" system, imposing a restriction upon the total number of women appointed to the Service in any one year, or upon the total number employed in the Service. In our view, any such restrictive measure is at best unsatisfactory. Either it must be ineffective, or else it must operate to exclude from the Service a woman who has taken a higher place in the examination than one of the successful male candidates. Such a result would be difficult to defend.

12. A more important consideration in the present connexion is that the experimental period should provide data as to the number of women who would obtain appointment to the Diplomatic Service, competing on equal terms with men.

We refer in paragraph 23 (f) to the small number of women presenting themselves for the Civil Service Administrative Class examination (see Appendix II). Many reasons were given to us for this disappointing result; the comparatively small number of women receiving a university education, the alleged necessity for a further year of study after the university course and before the examination, and the comparative unwillingness of parents to find the money for such a course for their daughters, the lack of knowledge among both women undergraduates and the teaching staffs of women's colleges of the attractions of a Civil Service career. These explanations are all conjectural; but they seem applicable in a greater degree to candidates for the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. We see no ground for supposing that any excessive number of women will be successful in any time which we can foresee.

We wish to add that for our part we doubt whether much weight can properly be attached to the argument referred to in paragraph 23 (f) that the likelihood or probability that few women would obtain entry to the Diplomatic Service affords a valid argument for excluding them altogether from that Service.

Length of Experimental Period.

13. It is difficult to know how long the experimental period should be.

If it is too short, the number of women admitted and the number of posts at which they can be stationed will be insufficient to afford a fair test. If it is too long, the women who have taken advantage of the opportunity will have reached an age at which it will be difficult to absorb them in other occupations under Government. Bearing these considerations in mind, we have endeavoured to find

a period which, so far as possible, avoids these dangers. The normal period of service in the Foreign Office for a new entrant is two years, followed by periods of two or three years in successive foreign capitals. We think that the period chosen for the experiment should be long enough to cover service at home and two or nearly two periods of foreign service. On the other hand, the entering age in both the Foreign Office and the Home Civil Service is about 23. Transfer, while comparatively simple in the early years of service, becomes increasingly difficult at a later stage. We think that seven years might be chosen as the period. A shorter period would hardly give time for an effective test; a longer time would involve the dangers which we have already mentioned. It would not be possible to date this period from August 1934, when the next examination will be held. We think that it should date from August 1935.

14. It is true that a woman entering the Service towards the end of the period would have no opportunity of proving her worth and the value of women's services generally, before she would be liable to have her career cut short by the termination of the period. But this criticism appears to us to mistake the nature of the test which we propose. His Majesty's Government, when reviewing the subject at the end of the period which we have suggested, will act in a general review of everything that has happened during the period and can then extend it or cut it short, as they may be advised. The object of naming a particular period is to give notice to those who enter that they will be liable, if the experiment should fail, to be transferred at the time chosen.

Possible Objections to Experimental Period.

15. Two possible objections to the experimental period proposed may be referred to. First, it may be said that if women are once admitted to the Service under the guise of an experiment, it will be impossible ever to reverse the decision. We do not see why this should be so. His Majesty's Government will be free at the end of the period to take such action as appears best in the circumstances as they then are. If His Majesty's Government should think fit to adopt the recommendation, it will be made clear to all concerned that the situation is subject to review, and the argument that women are in possession and cannot be disturbed will not be admissible.

In the second place, it may be suggested that women who enter the Service during the experimental period will be at the risk of encountering such prejudice in the Mission to which they are posted that success will be impossible. We have recorded the fact that all Heads of Missions are opposed to the change; but we feel sure that the Head of any Mission to which a woman was attached would observe and view the results of a trial impartially.

Conclusion.

16. Our conclusion is that an experiment such as that outlined above would be in the public interest. Our main reasons in support of this conclusion may be summarised as follows:—

- (i) We are satisfied that the experiment could be carried out without any serious risk of impairing the efficiency of the Service. Even if the worst anticipations of those opposed to the change should prove to be justified, the prestige of the Service is too firmly fixed to be impaired by so restricted a change.
- (ii) In the second place, we regard it as in the public interest to afford a basis on which a satisfactory conclusion can be reached whether men and women can be employed together in the Diplomatic Service on equal terms. The campaign in favour of opening the Service to women has now continued for a number of years. If no action is taken on the lines now suggested, it is possible that the question might one day become a matter of acute political controversy. This would clearly be undesirable, and might result in some less cautious solution than that which we suggest.
- (iii) In the third place, if it is found that women can be employed in the Diplomatic Service on equal terms with men, we think that it would be in the public interest that they should be so employed. Such employment would widen the field of selection and the field of experience in the Service, and would be in conformity with the general policy underlying the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act.

CLAUD SCHUSTER, *Chairman.*
JAMES RAE.

ADDENDUM II TO THE REPORT.

*Recommendations of Sir Ronald Graham, Sir Roderick Meiklejohn,
Mr. C. Howard Smith and Mr. T. D. Dunlop.*

THAT the moment has not yet arrived for the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service, even for a limited period as an experimental measure.

(1) In view of the evidence submitted to us, and bearing in mind the view of the MacDonnell Commission referred to in paragraph 8 of this Report, viz., that "in connexion with the employment of

women the object should be not to provide employment for women as such, but to secure to the State the advantage of the services of women whenever those services will best promote its interests," we are unable to admit that, in the present circumstances and at the present time, the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service would best promote the interests of the State.

(2) The Report of your Committee, in dealing with the considerable mass of statements, both written and oral, submitted to it, does no more than attempt to summarise them impartially. But a perusal of the written statements and of the actual records of evidence discloses obvious divergencies in their character and quality. On the one side were the women's societies, naturally eager to extend the fields of feminine activity, and fully convinced that women are as capable as men of performing almost any task, together with other witnesses whose evidence was usually based on similar theories. On the other side were not only the strongly expressed views of the Government Department most concerned, but the reports of practically all the Heads of His Majesty's Embassies and Legations abroad, of the junior officials, and of the ladies connected with the Diplomatic Service, together with the opinion of practically all the witnesses, male or female, who possessed any personal and practical knowledge or experience of diplomatic life, and of the duties and responsibilities of Secretaries and Heads of Mission in posts abroad, or of local feeling in foreign countries on the question at issue. One might be tempted to discount some of this body of opinion as tainted with official prejudice, if it did not coincide with that of the commercial community, as expressed by the Federation of British Industries, and by all those Chambers of Commerce whose views were obtained and presented by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce. Since the war the foreign services have been reorganised and developed to meet the demands of the commercial community, and at a time when the furtherance of British trade and commerce in every part of the world is of paramount importance, we feel it impossible to disregard the strong views of our representative commercial bodies on this question.

Nobody can for a moment call in question the admirable services rendered by women in the Home Departments, or as missionaries and doctors in trying and unhealthy spots, usually, however, situated in British territory. But such services have little or no analogy with those which they would be called upon to render in foreign capitals. Nor does the good work performed by women in connexion with the League of Nations afford any true criterion of their ability to carry out the duties of a diplomatic officer, seeing that the atmosphere and conditions of work at Geneva differ in a marked degree from those obtaining in ordinary diplomatic posts.

(3) We do not recommend that the exclusion of women from the Diplomatic Service should extend beyond the time when public feeling abroad on this question comes to resemble that now prevailing in this country. But this moment appears to us by no means imminent;

indeed, in certain important countries there appears to be a growing trend to exclude women from the political sphere. It is noteworthy that an important witness in favour of the admission of women to the Diplomatic Service estimated that there would be 28 countries where their employment, at any rate in the higher posts, would give rise to serious difficulties, and would therefore for the present be inadvisable. We consider this estimate under the mark, and the disadvantages would, in our view, apply quite as much to the lower ranks as to the higher. Nor can we accept the suggestion of Sir Claud Schuster and Sir James Rae that there are only a handful of posts (possibly two or three in number) where the appointment of women would, by almost universal consent, be regarded as impossible. In our opinion, it would be generally agreed that a far larger proportion of the total number of posts would be so regarded, and our experience, fortified by that of those who have personally served not only at home but also abroad, leads us to believe that there is a still greater number of posts where the employment of women might at first sight appear possible, but would, in fact, be open to the gravest objections. Even if women could be admitted to the remainder, this would, in our opinion, be the negation of a fair field and no favour.

(4) Various witnesses have asserted that many foreign countries are employing women in their diplomatic services. We question the utility of attempting a comparison between our Diplomatic Service and those of foreign countries where totally different conditions prevail in regard to the selection, promotion and transfer of officials. While we appreciate that the evidence on this point was given in good faith, we have, nevertheless, thought it advisable to check it by reference to the Governments of the countries concerned. As a result, we are compelled to reject much of it as inaccurate and misleading. In all, 14 countries were quoted to us by name as employing women in their Diplomatic Services. Of these, three have never in fact admitted women; three have in the past admitted women, or one woman, but do so no longer; three others admit women to their Foreign Offices, but do not consider them as eligible for service abroad; and of the 13 women stated to be or to have been employed in Diplomatic or quasi-Diplomatic posts by the remaining five countries, five resigned after short periods of service, and six do not furnish the slightest analogy with the system of admission by competitive examination in force in this country. There seems, in fact, to be a tendency on the part of those countries which have attempted or considered the experiment now to reject it. We have been recommended to appear as pioneers in the movement, but there is at least the danger that we might be pioneering in a territory which had been already explored and abandoned.

(5) *Marriage Bar.*—We note that our Chairman and Sir James Rae consider that the marriage bar should, the case arising, be enforced more rigorously in the Diplomatic Service than in the Home Civil Service. We feel bound, however, to point out that all

the women's societies which gave evidence before us were strongly opposed to the enforcement of the marriage bar, and that very few of the witnesses who supported their views were ready to admit that the position of a woman diplomatist abroad with an unemployed husband attached to her presented any serious problem.

(6) We regret that, holding the conviction which we do, we are altogether unable to accept the proposal for an experimental period made by our Chairman and Sir James Rae, not only because we disagree with it in principle, but also because we do not think that it would provide a satisfactory test. The entrance examination to the Diplomatic Service is at least as difficult as that for the Home Services; indeed, there are special qualifications required for it. We note that for the Home Service no women candidates have been successful during the last three years. It seems to us, therefore, probable that during the seven years' period suggested, extremely few women candidates would succeed in entering the Diplomatic Service. We cannot believe that a test applied on this scale would afford any criterion for establishing the suitability or otherwise of women for employment in the Diplomatic Service or for gauging the public feeling in foreign countries with regard to such appointments.

Finally, we deprecate the idea that this question might one day become a matter of acute political controversy. From the evidence submitted to us, it is by no means clear that the majority of British womanhood would wish to see this country represented abroad by women. Our impression is, indeed, to the contrary effect.

T. D. DUNLOP.
RONALD GRAHAM.
RODERICK MEIKLEJOHN.
C. HOWARD SMITH.

ADDENDUM III TO THE REPORT.

Recommendations of Miss Martindale and Miss Ritson in favour of the Admission of Women to the Diplomatic and the Consular Services.

Diplomatic Service.

(1) WE wish to associate ourselves with the main tenor of the conclusion reached in the Addendum to the Report submitted by Sir Claud Schuster and Sir James Rae. We are clear that if it is

found that women can be employed in the Diplomatic Service on equal terms with men, it would be in the public interest that they should be so employed—that such employment would widen the field of selection and the field of experience in the Service, and would be in conformity with the general policy underlying the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act.

(2) We do not desire to brush aside lightly the arguments adduced by representatives of the Foreign Office or by the heads of British Missions abroad against the admission of women to the Service; but, again, we fully subscribe to the statement contained in paragraph 2 of the above-mentioned Addendum to the effect that, “although the objections urged have been put forward with evident sincerity, and supported by knowledge of the field and practical experience of the work, they do not differ in kind from those advanced when on previous occasions new activities have been opened to women. These objections were based on conjecture, and have for the most part been proved to be without foundation. It appears to us that on general grounds those who now advocate this fresh advance have established a *prima facie* case to have their theories put to the test.”

(3) Further, it is to be noted that evidence produced in regard to the relative numbers of men and women students in the two Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, which have hitherto supplied the majority of the candidates for posts in the higher Civil Service, showed that in 1932 to 1933 at Oxford University there were 3,970 full-time men students and 835 women students, and at Cambridge the relative numbers were 5,206 and 498.

In view of (a) the great preponderance of male students, and (b) the fact that the number of vacancies to be filled in the Diplomatic Service averages not more than seven per annum, it can with certainty be said that if the Service is opened to women their infiltration will be gradual, and its very gradualness will be a factor in overcoming such difficulties as may arise in giving effect to any new departure.

(4) We think it right to stress the safeguards which already exist in the Service for the maintenance of its efficiency and for the preservation of the prestige of this country in foreign eyes—to both of which points we attach the utmost importance.

In accordance with the arrangements at present in force for male candidates—

- (a) Women candidates for admission to the Service will, like men candidates, come up for special interview and will be adjudged on their personality and their gifts for this particular form of work in so far as it is possible to judge those gifts in either a man or a woman at the early age of 19 to 23.
- (b) Women candidates successful at the special interview will thereafter undergo a competitive examination of a high

standard, in which they will compete on exactly the same terms as male candidates.

- (c) Women candidates successful in that examination will enter the Service as Third Secretaries, and will usually spend two years in the Foreign Office, during which period any special aptitude which they develop will be able to be gauged. Thereafter they will be sent abroad and their promotion to any higher rank will depend upon their ability to perform their duties satisfactorily.
- (d) The average period of service which elapses before promotion to First Secretary is twelve to fourteen years, and officers do not as a rule reach Ministerial rank before the lapse of twenty to twenty-five years, while Ambassadorial rank, where it is attained, is most unlikely to be reached until at least thirty to thirty-five years after entry to the Service.
- (e) Promotion in the Service is largely based on a system of personal reports, and reports on women Secretaries will be furnished in the same way as reports are furnished in regard to the work and ability of male Secretaries.
- (f) If a woman Secretary proves to be unsuitable for one post (a situation which arises even to-day, not only in the Foreign Service, but even in the Home Departments, among both men and women), that Secretary can be transferred to another post, as is the present custom with male Secretaries, in order to test her abilities in another *milieu* and under another chief.

(5) These are the safeguards which operate at the moment against inefficiency in the Service. They have presumably been introduced in order to make certain that the right type of man is found to represent this country in the right type of post. We believe these safeguards would operate equally effectively in regard to the women personnel of the Service, and we think, therefore, it is unnecessary to suggest a trial period for the employment of women.

(6) We have thought it unnecessary to refer to the question of marriage, as we presume that the rule governing the retirement of women on marriage would be applied to the Foreign Service on the same lines as it is being applied in the Home Service.

(7) We would add that, in our view, candidates for this Service will be found among women who are students of international affairs and to whom this type of work appeals. They will have weighed up the advantages and disadvantages inherent in a Service which operates on foreign soil, and they will be prepared to face life abroad with its inevitable restriction of companionship and absence of home ties.

(8) In conclusion, we wish to say that, although it may be true that in certain countries women diplomats may at the outset of their career encounter some degree of prejudice and opposition, we cannot

believe that the prestige of the British Government will be lowered by British women proving to other nations that they are able to take part in international affairs with dignity and efficiency.

Consular Service.

(9) In certain respects the Consular Service resembles the Diplomatic Service, and therefore certain of the points which we have made above are relevant in considering the situation which would arise if the Consular Service were opened to women. For example: (a) the Consular Service is recruited in the same careful manner as the Diplomatic Service, by personal interview preliminary to the written examination; and (b) infiltration of women into the Service would be very gradual, as the number of vacancies in the Service has averaged only ten per annum during the last seven years.

(10) We agree, however, that the Consular Service differs from the Diplomatic Service in its method of training, in its organisation and in its work, and that these differences produce certain problems for consideration by the Committee which do not exist to the same extent in the case of the Diplomatic Service.

(11) The training of a consular officer differs from that of the diplomat, in respect that it is carried out at posts in the Near and Far East in order to enable him to study oriental languages. After the linguistic training period is over, Vice-Consuls are drafted to Consulates-General to learn shipping and other routine work, and thereafter during their Vice-Consular career they are normally employed at posts where there is a resident Consul, although out of 93 posts at which Vice-Consuls are employed, there are 24 posts where experienced Vice-Consuls are in sole charge. The term of service as a Vice-Consul averages twelve to fourteen years.

(12) We do not for an instant wish to suggest that life in foreign countries and in tropical and semi-tropical climates does not produce certain dangers and difficulties both for men and women of British nationality, nor would we wish to say that officers entering the Consular Service will not find themselves on occasion assigned to posts which may be termed lonely and uncomfortable. We do, however, think it right to draw attention to the fact that loneliness, discomfort and unhealthiness are relative terms, the significance of which has greatly altered within recent years. We are living in days when the world is encircled by cable and wireless communications, when rapid transit is nearly everywhere available, where air-services are becoming an increasingly important factor in the annihilation of distance, and are referred to in many of the recent Consular Reports along with wireless facilities as a means of furthering trade interests. Already Bagdad is an important international air centre, three air lines operating regular services through it and a fourth proposing to commence operations. In these days, also, world tours are accepted as a matter of course by the ordinary citizen, and tourist agencies have penetrated districts such as the

interior of North Africa, and established hotels at many and various places.

A perusal of the Consular Reports⁽¹⁾ issued by the Department of Overseas Trade will best illustrate what we desire to emphasise, namely, that although the modern world has produced its own problems for solution, the conditions of life in 1934 are such as to modify greatly certain disabilities which formerly attached to our scattered Consulates, and laid on them enormous responsibilities, especially in times of war or other catastrophic occurrences.

Again, when one comes to discuss the question of unhealthy areas, one must not forget that although malaria and other parasitic diseases are still very prevalent, remarkable progress has been made in recent years in perfecting the knowledge which enables man to combat these diseases.

Generally, in regard to life in remote and tropical areas, we think it relevant to point out that for many years the Government, through the Colonial Office, has quietly and unobtrusively recruited women in considerable numbers, and has assigned them to posts in these areas where their services were needed. It is true that the age limits for Colonial Service differ from those adopted in the Consular Service, but, on the other hand, many women who enter the Colonial Service live in tropical or semi-tropical areas from the beginning to the end of their official careers, whereas life in the Consular Service under the new conditions outlined in the scheme of reorganisation offers the almost certain relief of occasional or permanent transference to a more temperate climate.

(13) In regard to all these environmental questions, we would record the same view as we have recorded above in regard to candidates for the Diplomatic Service. We believe that such women as wish to enter the Consular Service as a career will do so mainly because the work appeals to them, and they will have duly considered and accepted the circumstances in which that work has to be done before they offer themselves as candidates for admission to the Service.

(1) The Report of the Consul in the Belgian Congo (No. 563), Department of Overseas Trade, Economic Situation in Belgian Congo (1926-33) describes life in the towns (Elizabethville and Jadotville) as very pleasant, with abundance of opportunity for recreation of all kinds. Lourenço Marques, a town in Portuguese East Africa, is described in the report from the consul who is located there (No. 537, Department of Overseas Trade, Economic Conditions in Portuguese East Africa (1930-32)) as a modern town, continental in appearance, kept scrupulously clean, with excellent hotels, tennis courts, golf course, and a bathing place, developed by the municipality and already widely recognised as a popular summer seaside resort for visitors from South Africa, with which colony it is connected with good motor roads. The Report from the Panamá Canal Zone (No. 536, Department of Overseas Trade, Economic Conditions in the Republic of Panamá and the Panamá Canal Zone (1931-32)) indicates the developments in modern travelling, and states that during 1931 38,258 passengers, more than half of whom were first-class passengers, disembarked at zone ports, and, in addition, over 100,000 passengers from vessels remaining in ports under 48 hours went ashore to purchase souvenirs, &c. Moreover, three airway services operate from Colon connecting it with South American ports and cities, with the West Indies and with Miami.

(14) With the growth and development of the modern State, the duties devolving on our Consuls tend somewhat to alter. We are informed that although Naval Courts are still held at infrequent intervals they are falling into disuse, and the exercise of rights under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts is now limited to four countries. On the other hand, commercial duties have assumed a greater importance. These duties, as undertaken by the Consular Officer, are in the nature of intelligence work for British trade, and do not differ materially from the intelligence work done in the Home Departments. We regret that up to the present no woman has been trained to take her part in this work which is being developed overseas. Evidence was laid before us to the effect that commercial firms in this country are employing women in connexion with their continental trade, and leaving aside for the moment the question of woman's ability to cover the whole range of duties assigned to the Consular Service, we feel that there are bound to be areas in which her specific knowledge could have been used with advantage to British trade.

(15) We have given due consideration to the resolutions passed by the British Chambers of Commerce and to the evidence laid before the Committee by Lloyd's representative. We feel, however, that these expressions of opinion must be accepted with the same reservations as are made above (paragraph (2)) in regard to the objections urged by those who would oppose the entry of women to the Diplomatic Service.

We feel that if certain trade organisations in this country had been asked to express their opinion as to whether posts in the Factory and Health Insurance Inspectorates and, more recently, the administrative grade of the Board of Trade should be opened to women, similar replies would have been received, and yet for many years women have been employed with advantage on the outdoor staffs of the Home Office and the Health Departments, and we understand that the admission of women to the Board of Trade has raised no difficulties. Moreover, we think the same arguments would have been used against the admission of women to the Intelligence Officer grade of the Department of Overseas Trade, a grade which is recruited in the same manner and through the same examination as the Consular Service, and in which women have been employed since 1927.

(16) We turn now to that side of the Consular work which deals with the Mercantile Marine. Various duties are laid on Consuls by the terms of the Merchant Shipping Acts, and the Service is so organised that, as is stated in the main Report, out of 196 of the posts at which career consular officers are stationed, 120 are at seaports.

(17) We agree that the present method of training probationer Vice-Consuls and the present organisation of the Service pre-supposes a comparatively high standard of interchangeability, and the question of the employment of women on shipping work at ports becomes, therefore, a matter of importance under our terms of reference.

(18) We have noted the reservations made by the Royal

Commission on the Civil Service and the Committee on Women's Questions as to the employment of women in posts where the duties consist of or include work at ports. Certain duties which are laid on Consular Officers by the Merchant Shipping Acts are analogous to duties carried out by officers in the Home Service who are employed in departmental grades which are at present reserved for men. We feel bound to agree that such difficulties as may be experienced in carrying out work in home ports are likely to be intensified in certain foreign ports, and that consequently the restriction on women's employment in the Home Service must govern our consideration of the possibility of their immediate and unrestricted employment in the Consular Service.

(19) Nevertheless, it seems proper to us to emphasise certain points in regard to Consular work which differentiate it from the work of the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade—the Department which carries out analogous shipping duties:—

- (a) The Consular Service is a composite one, involving not only work at ports, but at many inland stations, and it touches the lives of British citizens of both sexes.
- (b) Many of the shipping duties which fall to be carried out by Consular Officers can be and are carried out as part of their office routine. Shipping and port duties form only part of the duties of those officers in the Service who are assigned to ports, and even those duties require attendance of the officer on board ship or at the docks, not as a matter of routine, but on special and at least in some areas infrequent occasions.
- (c) There are a multiplicity of duties apart from Mercantile Marine duties which fall to be carried out by Consular Officers, and in regard to these duties, some of which are concerned with the intimate lives of women, no doubt can be entertained of the ability of women to discharge them.

(20) Although, therefore, the restriction which is maintained in regard to port services at home compels us to the conclusion that it might be premature to recommend the immediate and unrestricted opening of the Consular Service to women, we believe that the Service has certain features which single it out as a Service in which the ability of women to carry out duties connected with the Mercantile Marine might well be tested. In the words used by Sir Warren Fisher when dealing with this Service in his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, we think that such a test should be made "experimentally and quietly," and we propose that it should be carried out, if possible, without undue disturbance of the present organisation of the Service.

In effect, we recommend that this test should be carried out by the adoption of the method of seconding a limited number of women officers from the Home Civil Service, and we believe that women

with suitable qualifications may be found in Departmental Classes as well as other classes in the Civil Service. The method of seconding, which entails the transfer of an officer from one Department to another, is a system which, in the case of men, has been established for many years in the Home Civil Service.

We should not be in favour of special posts being created for women, but would recommend that the women seconded under this scheme should be employed in the Service on the same terms as men.

Further, we recommend that women should be considered together with men for appointment as unsalaried Consuls in those places which are not of sufficient importance to justify a career consul.

HILDA MARTINDALE.
MURIEL RITSON.



PAMPHLET