

*Federation of Women
Civil Servants*

REPORT

*for the year ending March 31st
1922*



PRICE 2D

Office :

18, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1

OBJECTS

1. To protect and promote the common interests of Women in the Civil Service.
2. To remove the artificial restrictions placed on their employment.
3. To secure that their remuneration for services rendered shall not be differentiated by reason of sex.
4. To secure the free and unfettered admission of women to all appointments in the Service.
5. To secure the removal of the civil and political disabilities of women.

Federation of Women Civil Servants.

REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 31st, 1922.

Paradoxes.

IN reviewing the year 1921-22, we are confronted with the confusing paradoxes of a period of transition. We have proved again the broad basis of the support we can rely on both in Parliament and among the organized women of the country, and on the other hand we have seen with what cynical indifference the Departments can ignore the will of Parliament. We have been rejected by the N.W.C. and accepted by the Treasury. Some of our members have complained that we did too little for them, others that we did too much, but we are proud to know that the Officers and Executive have preserved the enthusiastic confidence of the vast majority, and that we can record an increase in our membership.

Grading.

As we go to press, grading hangs in the balance. After more than a year's strenuous efforts on Departmental Grading Committees our members have seen, time after time, executive work graded clerical so soon as it was known that women performed it, higher duties taken away from women who had been satisfactorily engaged on them for years, the so-called examination and comparison of work considered by tribunals different for men and women. In several cases the new scheme has been "agreed" despite the women's protests, and it is feared that no belated manifestations of Treasury goodwill can now avail to prevent the down-grading of the women's work from becoming an accomplished fact.

Protest Meeting.

A very successful meeting was held at Caxton Hall in July, 1921, to protest against the long delay in giving a date for the debate on the Temporary Regulations, and some excellent advice was given us on that occasion by various speakers—Major Hills, Capt. Elliot, Sir D. Maclean, Miss G. Tuckwell, Miss L. Barker and Mrs. Strachey.

The Resolution of August 5th.

And, at last, the whole position was, theoretically, changed by the Resolution of the House on August 5th, 1921. The long-deferred debate took place that day, and Major Hills, M.P., moved the Resolution which had been approved by the Parliamentary Committee on women in the Civil Service. The "economy" cry was then in full blast, and it was realized that to press the claim for equal pay at that moment might imperil the whole Resolution and lose for us the opportunity of really valuable gains on other points. On the other hand the Chancellor of the Exchequer, concerned at the volume of

support accorded by men of all parties to the Resolution, compromised with the mover behind the scenes and eventually moved, himself, the Resolution which was accepted by the House, the terms of which are as follows:

"(1) That this House approves of the temporary Regulations for competitions governing the appointment of women to situations in the new reorganization classes in the Home Civil Service.

"Provided that after a provisional period of three years women shall be admitted to the Civil Service of His Majesty within the United Kingdom under the same Regulations, present or future, as provide for and prescribe the mode of admission for men.

"Provided, further, that the allocation by the Civil Service Commissioners of such candidates as qualify at the examination shall be made with due regard to the requirements of the situation to be filled.

"(2) That women shall be appointed to and continue to hold posts in the Civil Service within the United Kingdom under the same Regulations, present or future, as govern the classification and (in so far as regards status and authority) other conditions of service for men.

"(3) That, having regard to the present financial position of the country, this House cannot commit itself to the increase in Civil Service salaries involved in the payment of women in all cases at the same rate as men; but that the question of the remuneration of women as compared with men shall be reviewed within a period not exceeding three years.

"Provided that arrangements in hand for the inclusion of ex-service men on special terms be not by these resolutions prevented or delayed."

What we Gained.

Attention has been so generally focussed on Clause 2, because that is concerned with matters of immediate import—classification, status and authority of women now in the Service—that the immense importance of Clause 1 is sometimes forgotten; but it is, in reality, no small achievement to have secured that, after the three years' interval necessary for the absorption of temporary staff, no woman shall enter the Service save through the same competitive examination as men.

"One Point in Ten."

We have often, since that day, recalled Capt. Elliott's prescient observation at the July Protest meeting, that victory was but one point in ten: the other nine consisted in seeing we were not turned out of the position won. We joined in the celebration of victory by a dinner to our Parliamentary friends on August 18th, an occasion of some notable speeches, including one from Sir Philip Ll. Graeme, a member of the Government, in which he assured the women that it was the Government's intention to carry out the Regulations in the spirit as well as the letter. Six months later, however, when the Grading scandal was at its height, another member of the Government—no less a person than the Financial Secretary to the Treasury—candidly admitted that no practical effect whatever had been given to the August 5th Resolution.

Counsel's Opinion.

Meanwhile, we had made sure of our ground. We had obtained the opinion of an experienced Parliamentary Counsel and found that it supported our view, that Clause 2 of the Resolution *did* apply immediately, and that thus the Government were bound—so far as a Parliamentary Resolution proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and carried by agreement could bind them—to modify drastically the grading proposals, and to see that the

women now in the service did have—now, this year—equality of "classification, status and authority" with men.

In the House.

As, however, they showed no signs of any such intention, we were forced to have recourse again to Parliamentary action; and we cannot too warmly express our appreciation of the help we have constantly received in this campaign from our friends in Parliament—men and women of all parties—who put searching questions on various aspects of our case with such untiring pertinacity. It is distressing to have to chronicle that the official answers have at times passed the limits even of evasion and suppression.

Lady Astor's "At Homes."

We should like here to record our grateful sense of the debt we owe to Lady Astor, M.P., for the opportunities which her democratic hospitality continues to provide for friendly meetings between professional women and members of the House of Commons, Heads of Departments and others. The "Member for Women" is always an invaluable champion of our cause.

Treasury Interviews.

Negotiations with the Treasury have pursued their lengthy course of correspondence and interviews, but we observe with pleasure the manifestation of a better spirit animating our relations with that Department, and we believe that some really useful results may be expected from a recent discussion regarding transfers; but performance lags far behind profession. Moreover, the Chancellor has promised us women establishment officers, and we hear the appointments will shortly be made.

The National Whitley Council.

Our request for a Special Committee of the N.W.C. to consider and express the women's view on all matters dealt with by the Council was refused in June. In October the Council reconstituted itself in a manner eminently characteristic of this strange "sport" of Whitleyism. After announcing that it would convene representatives of all Service organizations to deal with the matter, it suddenly thought worse of it and decided to reappoint itself more or less as before, the chief modification consisting in the allotment of three seats to Temporary Staff representatives. The Federation of Women Civil Servants was again excluded.

The C.S.A. Board.

A sinister development is the sudden decision to abolish the Arbitration Board on the curious pretext that it "militated against the development of the Whitley Councils." The essence of true Whitleyism is agreement, and where that cannot be secured the need for an impartial tribunal is imperative.

We had two hearings by the Board: one in July, 1921, on the interpretation of certain clauses in the Assimilation Agreement, and the other in March, 1922, on the pay and date of appointment with substantive rank of certain Acting Assistant Superintendents and Acting Principal Clerks in the G.P.O. In both cases, to our disappointment, the Board found that the matter did not come within its scope to decide. Surely extension of its terms of reference, rather than extinction, was the obvious need.

Mrs. Strachey's Committee and the Six-Point Group.

The Joint Committee on Women in the Civil Service has continued its valuable activities on our behalf. And the Six-Point Group has included our cause among the points on which it presses for redress. Our Hon. Secretary has addressed one of its small meetings, and our General Secretary has provided information to its lecturers.

The Consultative Committee.

A most valuable channel of support for our interests, as for other causes women have specially at heart, is afforded by the Consultative Committee of Women's Organizations. Resolutions on our behalf have received a most striking measure of endorsement at more than one meeting of that body.

Interviews with M.P.'s and Candidates.

Federation representatives have joined the deputations organized by the N.U.S.E.C. to interview Parliamentary candidates—in Southwark, Hornsey, Camberwell and St. Pancras, and the sitting members in Chelsea and North Lambeth. And the General Secretary attended the very interesting reception given at Bedford College in March, 1922, "to meet the women candidates for Parliament."

Dame Adelaide Anderson.

The Federation was well represented at the complimentary dinner given in October, 1921, to Dame Adelaide Anderson, late Principal Lady Inspector of Factories, on the occasion of the presentation to her of the testimonial cheque.

Civil Service Dinner.

And we also took part in the Civil Service Dinner in February, 1922, arranged by the Society of Civil Servants, attended as Guest of Honour by H.R.H. the Duke of York, and addressed by Sir James Masterton Smith, the Lord Chancellor, the Hon. Maude Lawrence and others. It was distinctly gratifying to note that on that occasion one of the best speeches of the evening was made by Miss Lawrence, Director of Women's Establishments at the Treasury.

On the less political side of our activities we have various items of interest to chronicle.

Change of Address.

We have moved our Headquarters from Victoria Street to No. 18, Russell Square, a pleasant office looking south over the square, and we have the A.P.O.W.C. office next door to us.

Portrait Presentation.

We have been presented by Miss Squire with the portrait engraving of Miss Mason, first L.G.B. Woman Inspector, as, on the merging of the Women's Branch of the H.O. Inspectorate, it was felt that this possession of theirs ought to become the property of a body of women in the Service.

Council and Committee Meetings.

There have been four meetings of the Council and sixteen of the Executive Committee during the year, an interesting innovation being the provision of facilities enabling non-London delegates to attend the Council meetings each quarter. Various Committees and sub-Committees of a more or less temporary character, have met, in particular the Superannuation Committee, and the Organization Sub-Committee to prepare for the changes in Association representation consequent on the completion of the official reorganization of the Service, whenever that may be. The Ministry of Labour representation has been co-ordinated as that of one Association with two branches. Meetings of all-Service Women Whitley representatives have also been held at the Federation Headquarters.

New Constituent Associations.

Early in the year our constituent Associations increased by two, those of the N.H.I.C., Ireland, and of the Foreign Office; but we have lately lost the Irish body on their severance from the British Civil Service.

"At Homes."

Five successful "At Homes" have been held—three during the summer, one in November for the election of the Individual Group representatives to the Federation Council and Executive, and one in March, for the Branch Secretaries to have an opportunity of meeting Miss Lawrence. Our Individual Group has grown considerably, and we should like to welcome many more members.

Miss Evans.

We were fortunate in securing again for some months the services of Miss Evans as Organizer, and her work among the Branches, and in particular her visits to Manchester, Edinburgh and Dublin in October were most valuable. We are also greatly indebted to her for most useful work in connection with the W.F.L. Fair stall.

The Swimming Gala.

On the sports side, a highly successful swimming gala was organized by the Assistant Secretary, and took place in September at the Great Smith Street Baths. The Federation is offering a challenge trophy for competition this year (1922).

W.F.L. Fair.

The Federation had a double stall at the Freedom League Fair in November-December, and, in spite of the handicap of not including a Saturday

among the days this time, realized more for the 100,000 Shillings Fund than even in the previous year. A "best seller" was the special Federation Calendar for 1922—the prize-winning design submitted by a member in the L.T.S.

Relations with Other Organizations.

We have, during the year, affiliated to the **National Council of Women**, and the General Secretary is a member of the Committees of that body which are concerned with Legislation and with Industrial and Professional women. This has secured that the position of women in the Civil Service is to be brought before the International Congress of Women's Organizations at the Hague this year. The Secretary is also a member of the Equal Suffrage Committee of the **N.U.S.E.C.**, to which body the Federation has just been affiliated. Federation representatives attended the Union's garden party in July, and the General Secretary took the chair at their Family Endowment Conference in December. We are greatly indebted to the London Society for Women's Service for their activities on behalf of women in the Civil Service.

"Opportunity."

Our paper has safely weathered its first year, increased its circulation, and, we believe, established a not inconsiderable place for itself among Service publications. Our Parliamentary supplements are a special feature, the whole debate of August 5th, for example, being issued in this form with our August number. Moreover our advertisers report that a very gratifying response follows their announcements in *Opportunity*, and we suggest that if we had a few more, and many more contributions from our members, we might put on weight a little and appear as a 16-page paper instead of as the slender publication we have at present. But, in advertisements as in reading matter, "Quality first" is our concern.

HON. TREASURER'S NOTE.

The end of the financial year discloses the pleasing fact that the Federation has lived on its income, notwithstanding the very heavy expenses consequent on Parliamentary action and the extension of activities in many new directions.

The move to larger premises will, it is hoped, not mean a more expensive office organization, as it has been agreed to divide the accommodation and rent with the P.O.W.C. Association, thus extending an arrangement of some years' standing.

The increase in office staff necessitated by the ever-growing volume of work should result in not only considerable assistance to the Secretary, but also a decrease in the bills for typing and other clerical work.

The Fighting Fund, to which a welcome addition was made in December, as a result of the Federation stall at the Green, White and Gold Fair, is being used on propaganda work. The constituent Associations must therefore remember that the apparently large balance is not a reserve fund which might allow of a reduction in the affiliation fee, but represents also a fund which is being gradually expended on the cause for which it was subscribed. We might, perhaps, remind the various Executives that this fund is still open, and will remain so until our main object, "Equal pay for equal work," becomes an actual fact.

Federation of Women Civil Servants

President and Chairman: Miss J. W. FISK.

Vice-Chairman: Miss E. M. FROST.

Hon. Treasurer: Miss M. SYMONDS.

Hon. Secretary: Miss D. SMYTH.

Hon. Organizing Secretary: Miss F. E. JAMES.

General Secretary: Mrs. E. M. WHITE.

Constituent Associations.

1. Association of Post Office Women Clerks. Secretary, Miss N. K. ARGYLE, 86, Shrewsbury Road, New Southgate, N. 11.
2. Association of Women Clerks and Junior Staff Officers in the Ministry of Labour. Secretary, Miss M. JONES, Finance Department, Ministry of Labour, Kew.
3. Association of Women Clerks in the Ministry of Health. Secretary, Miss V. E. BURGE, 116, Elgin Avenue, W. 9.
4. Association of Women Clerks in the Board of Education. Secretary, Miss L. M. W. HILL, 20, Nicosia Road, S.W. 18.
5. Association of Women Clerks in the Public Trustee Office. Secretary, Miss O. W. BROOKER, 155, Crofton Park Road, Brockley, S.E. 4.
6. Association of Women Clerks of Scottish Board of Health. Secretary, Miss A. D. WATSON, Scottish Board of Health, Grassmarket, Edinburgh.
7. Association of Principal Clerks and Deputy Superintendents, Ministry of Health. Secretary, Miss M. STANTON, 73, Grafton Road, Acton, W. 3.
8. Association of Foreign Office Women Clerks. Secretary, Miss D. L. THURSTON, 4, Beaumont Road, N. 19.

Individual Group.

1. Individual Women Civil Servants for whom no Departmental or Sectional organization of women exists;
2. Individual members of those Departmental or Sectional organizations which are not within the Federation.

