

VOTES FOR WOMEN.



REPORT
OF THE
*Women's Freedom
League*

From April 1926 to April 1927

AND OF THE

TWENTIETH

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

April 30th, 1927.

Price Threepence.

PUBLISHED BY THE

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

144, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1.

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CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC
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In review

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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CONSTITUTION.

OBJECTS.—To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the powers already obtained to elect women to Parliament and upon other public bodies, for the purpose of establishing equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

MEMBERSHIP.—To be open to Women and Men who approve the objects and policy of the League, and who pay a yearly subscription, the minimum annual subscription being One Shilling.

COMMITTEE AND OFFICIALS.—The National Executive Committee shall consist of a President, an Honorary Treasurer and 12 members to be nominated by the Branches and elected by the Annual Conference, the Committee to have power to appoint its General Secretary (who shall be paid if necessary) and Heads of Departments.

The National Executive Committee to meet from 6 to 10 times in the year for the transaction of business; and the final power of the League to be vested in the Annual Conference, to which branches shall send their delegates, one delegate representing from 12 to 50 members.

METHODS.—The objects of the League shall be promoted by:—

1. Action entirely independent of all political parties.
2. Support of suitable women candidates, approved by Headquarters and our local Branch, for local bodies and for Parliament.
3. Education of public opinion in sex equality—women to have equal voting power with men, equal right to hold all high Offices of State, to be included in International Councils, to form one-half of all Reconstruction Committees, to have equal pay and equal opportunities in all professions and trades, and in all Government Offices. Women also to share equally in the administration of the law: the Prison Commissioners to consist equally of women and men and women to form one-half of every Jury Panel.
4. Co-operation in forming Associations of Women Voters to discuss public questions and to watch the proceedings of persons elected to local bodies and to Parliament. Further, to investigate the proceedings in local Police Courts in the interests of women.
5. Vigorous agitation to insist upon the recognition of equal morality for men and women, and to oppose any sex legislation which may operate unfairly between men and women.

Report of the TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE,

Saturday, April 30th, 1927,

CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence was in the Chair for the morning session, and Miss Anna Munro for the afternoon session. Delegates were present from Hampstead, Mid-London, Minerva Club, Ashford, Darlington, Deal and Walmer, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Portsmouth, Wallasey, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Montgomery Boroughs and Swansea.

All members of the retiring National Executive Committee were present with the exception of Miss C. Neal and the Scottish Representative.

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence was unanimously re-elected President, and Dr. Knight, Hon. Treasurer; the following were elected to form the National Executive Committee: Mrs. Brading, Miss Myra Sadd Brown, Miss Alix Clark, Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., Mrs. Dexter, Miss Anna Munro, Miss C. Neal, L.L.A., Miss M. I. Neal, Mrs. Pierotti, Miss Reeves, Mrs. Zangwill, Scottish Delegates (Mrs. Curdie, Miss Eunice Murray, Miss Manclark, Miss Ross.)

After the Chairman's Address, the Reports of the Honorary Treasurer, General Secretary, The Political Department, Honorary Organising Secretary and the Honorary Heads of the Literature and "Vote" Sales Departments and of the Minerva Publishing Company were adopted.

Emergency Resolutions were passed as follows:—

Equal Franchise.

This Conference of the Women's Freedom League congratulates the Prime Minister on his decision to introduce a Bill in the next Session to equalise the franchise at the age of 21. We strongly press him, however, to adopt, on behalf of the Government, the Representation of the People Bill, 1927, which is due for its Second Reading on May 20th, in the House of Commons, so that legislation may reach the Statute Book sufficiently early to ensure that not even by a possible "unexpected catastrophe" can women be prevented from voting at the same age and on the same terms as men at the next General Election.

Lead Paint (Protection against Poisoning) Act Amendment Bill.

This Conference calls upon the Government to give further facilities to the Lead Paint (Protection Against Poisoning) Act Amendment Bill, which seeks to prevent the exclusion of women from the use of lead paint on buildings.

Married Women's (Employment) Bill.

This Conference warmly congratulates Sir Robert Newman and Mr. Pethick-Lawrence on their splendid championship of women's independence in their efforts to secure the passing of the Married Women's (Employment)

Bill. We regret it did not secure a Second Reading, but we confidently hope it will do so on a future occasion.

Resolutions passed, those marked with a * unanimously.

Chief Objects of the League Reaffirmed.

*This Conference reiterates that the main object of the Women's Freedom League is to obtain the vote for women at the same age and on the same terms as men, and to use the powers already obtained to elect women to Parliament and upon other public bodies. It further reaffirms the position of the Women's Freedom League in regard to: (1) The eligibility of women for the House of Lords; (2) equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men throughout all branches of our national life; (3) the separate assessment and separate taxation of the incomes of married persons for the purpose of income tax; (4) the necessity for women prison commissioners, women governors and women medical officers in all women's prisons and women's sections of prisons, women inspectors of prisons, and women police; also for (5) an equal number of women of equal status with men on the Board of Control; and (6) insists upon the recognition of an equal moral standard for men and women, and the raising of the age of consent to 18, with a similar provision for boys.

Equal Rights for Women.

*This Conference calls upon the Government to introduce at an early date an Equal Parentage Bill.

*This Conference demands that neither sex nor marriage shall be a bar to appointments under any body dependent on public funds.

*This Conference considers that the present method of adding husbands' and wives' incomes together for taxation is most unjust, both to the husband and the wife; therefore increasing agitation should be used to urge His Majesty's Government to assess and tax each individually.

*This Conference demands that women should be accorded equal opportunities with men for employment as announcers on the B.B.C.

*That the Women's Freedom League urges all women's organisations to work for complete equality between the sexes.

*That, in connection with the proposed reorganisation of Government Departments for Scotland, this Conference urges that attention should be drawn to the necessity of affording equal opportunities for women with men.

Unemployed Women.

*This Conference calls upon the Government to consider the position of unemployed women, and to arrange that in all schemes devised for the training and employment of the workless, as much provision should be made for women as for men. It further demands that specialised training in industries, supported by public funds, should be open to women.

Women Municipal Candidates.

*This Conference considers that the Women's Freedom League should urge their Branches to take more interest in local affairs, and to give active support to suitable women candidates for local elections.

Women Magistrates and Women Police.

*This Conference demands that women be appointed on all Advisory Committees of the Commission of the Peace, and that more women magistrates be appointed.

*This Conference regrets the reception of the Home Office Circular 457,470/26 by the Chief Constables, and urges that the circular should be

made obligatory and not permissive. It demands the appointment of women police in all cities and boroughs.

Lunacy Reform.

This Conference is of opinion that women doctors should be in charge of all women patients in Public Mental Hospitals, that women should be appointed on the Committees of all Public Mental Hospitals, and that more women inspectors should be appointed by the Board of Control.

Educational.

*This Conference demands that it shall be illegal to restrict women as such from entering Universities, and protests emphatically against the limitation by the University of the number of women students at Oxford.

This Conference demands that the 1918 Education Act be put into force at once. It calls upon the Government to raise the school-leaving age to 15 immediately, and to allow all children, for whom it is desired, to continue their education free to 18; and it further urges that the number of children in the classes in the elementary schools be reduced to 30, and that greater facilities be provided for secondary and higher education.

National Insurance.

This Conference urges that Unemployment and Health Insurance shall commence at school-leaving age, whatever that may be.

This Conference demands that the prohibitive clauses in the Widows' Pensions Act should be deleted.

Housing.

Seeing that the housing shortage is still acute, this Conference calls upon the Government to put the provisions of the 1924 Act into operation when necessary.

General.

This Conference calls for an alteration in the law, so that it will be impossible for a husband to will all his property away from his wife.

This Conference demands that capital punishment be abolished.

Chairman's Address.

In the name of the National Executive Committee, I give you warmest welcome to this Conference. This year sees us nearer to the attainment of our first elementary demand than we have ever been before. Nothing but a sudden and unexpected dissolution of Parliament seriously threatens the prospect that, before we meet again, or at any rate before the next General Election, an Act, conferring full political equality upon women, will be on the Statute Book. This is, therefore, an occasion for joy, not the joy of those who put off the armour after victory, but the joy of those who put on the armour for the victorious stage of our very long warfare for the full political equality of women and men. But, at the very moment that this victory in the political field comes in sight, the enemies of women's emancipation are mustering on another front, and a new menace to women's spiritual liberty is being developed in the economic field. The basis of spiritual liberty is being developed in the economic field. The basis of spiritual liberty is of necessity an economic one. No human being can enjoy independence of

thought or action until he or she has attained financial independence, or the right to work in a self-chosen craft or profession. The deep-rooted hostility to women's moral and mental liberty, having at long last been defeated in the effort to keep women deprived of equal citizenship, is now being definitely organised in a growing movement to deprive them of equal status in the professional and industrial world.

Economic security and freedom are not only the basis of moral and mental liberty. For many women, as for many men, the self-chosen work is not only a means of self-support, but a means of self-expression. Work is worship. Love and work are religion. If a man is successful in his love and in his self-chosen work, he is in possession of fulness of life. The same is true of a woman. To take, by an arbitrary decision, her vocation from a woman, whether she is married or not married, is the greatest spiritual injury that can be inflicted upon her. Take, for example, the case of the woman teacher. Teaching is one of the most specialised vocations. It is comparable to ministry in the Church. It calls for mental and spiritual aptitudes of the highest order. To thrust a woman from her acquired position of headmistress of a large school, where she is exercising the most potent formative influences on young minds at the critical stage of their development, and to compel her to take up the work of cooking over the kitchen stove, for which craft another woman has been trained, is not only an economic waste, by which the family and the whole community are impoverished, but it is an outrage upon the most sacred rights of a human being.

Yet this outrage is now being perpetrated by solemn fools all over the country. Until this sacrilege against all that is holy in humanity has been rendered impossible, our liberty in the things of the spirit is an empty boast.

Yet, when this most important question is brought before our representatives in Parliament, what is the result?

I was in my place in the Gallery yesterday morning, when Sir Robert Newman proposed the Second Reading of his Bill to give married women the right to continue in their profession. I was surprised and shocked at the emptiness of the House. You have read what happened. Sir Robert's speech was interrupted by a count-out. Subsequently his Bill came again before the House and was defeated.

Except for the organised suffrage movement, women as a whole are not alive to the issues of that Bill—not even the women whose fate is directly involved. While the women teachers and the women medical officers are unanimous in their demand that marriage shall not arbitrarily bar them in the practice of their profession, we have to face the fact that the Union of Women Clerks in the Civil Service are definitely opposed, owing to fears relating to their imagined self-interest. Behind this opposition of the women clerks, the Government were able to shield themselves in their opposition to the Bill.

It is possible, of course, to bring in a Bill to enable married teachers and doctors to continue their professional work after marriage, and, no doubt the best policy will be to limit the scope of the Bill in this way, until the women Civil Servants bring longer views to bear on the problem. This incident shows how mistaken it is to take it for granted that women, for whose economic freedom we are working, will understand our point of view, unless we carry out a programme of argument, demonstration and debate.

We need to re-learn some of the lessons that we learnt 20 years ago: *That the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and the capacity for taking endless pains.* We have also to re-learn the difficult lesson that the entire solidarity of women of all classes, ages and Parties in regard to the attainment of freedom and equality alone can give us sufficient strength to defeat the hydra-headed tradition of women's dependence and subjection. As in the case of the right to vote, women's right to work has all the argument on its side, and this advantage we must press to its utmost extent.

One of our opponents in the House yesterday suggested that there were divisions of interest between the "over and under thirties." Surface differentiations obscure the main issue—which is that, if women do not

realise their solidarity in this issue, as they did in the issue of the vote, politicians, who still think in terms of a male electorate, will play fast and loose and will encroach on the whole field of women's economic and professional life.

There are questions closely allied to the one to which I have at length alluded—questions of legal differentiation between labour conditions of men and women, which all have in the long run, the result of depreciating the value of women's labour and putting it on a lower status than the labour of men.

A solid, active women's League is as necessary to-day as it was 20 years ago. It will be necessary for many years to come. And, though I long for the day when we shall recognise the oneness of humanity without emphasising the divisions of sex, I know that we can only hasten the coming of that day by a vigilant and militant movement, to secure for that half of the human race to which we belong equal freedom with men in the political, economic and spiritual spheres of our human life.

I therefore trust that the Women's Freedom League, so far from nearing the completion of its great task so faithfully fulfilled in the past, is about to enter upon a still more important and far-reaching campaign, concentrating in the first place upon the redemption of the Prime Minister's pledge and the placing upon the Statute Book of an Act giving all women who are over 21 years of age the right to vote; and, from that position of advantage, carrying forward their flag, until women share equally with men all the legal, economic and spiritual liberties that have been won, or that shall yet be won, by the human race.

Hon. Treasurer's Report.

We began 1926 with £145 balance, and it was only slightly less at the end of the year, but this satisfactory result was only obtained by using £100 of our £250 legacy from Mrs. Thomson-Price for our current expenses, which is very bad finance, the object of a legacy being to prevent financial loss to a Society by the death of its ardent supporters.

We have worked hard and incurred considerable expense in organising our branches, especially in the North, with the result that we have a flourishing new branch at Darlington and greatly invigorated branches at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dunoon. Our London branches also show steady growth.

Subscriptions and donations show a welcome increase of £38, but this is more than balanced by a decrease of £43 from branches. Several branches sent more last year: Hampstead, Mid-London, Ashford, Deal, Hastings, Portsmouth, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and I hope that others are improving this year.

The Spring Sale held on March 19th, at 25, Wimpole Street, by the kindness of Dr. Lewin, brought in £40.

Our "Green, White and Gold Fair" opened by Professor Winifred Cullis, O.B.E., D.Sc., on November 24th, and on November 25th, by the Lady Amhurst, of Hackney, at the Caxton Hall, was very enjoyable and brought in £269 as against £290 the previous year, the Hall is smaller so we miss the rent of the numerous stalls we could let at the Central Hall, but there is a small saving in expense.

Expenses show an increase of £30, chiefly in Halls, Stationery and Postage, indicating increased activity at Headquarters, in joining in the Peace and Suffrage processions, organising the Holborn constituency meeting, etc., and in Scotland where Miss Lenton has organised many public meetings in the Branches. Salaries are increased by £20. We have saved in Office Expenses, Printing and Travelling.

It is very encouraging to note that several branches are now doing their utmost to support their League, this is a great help and every branch must

rise to the effort and share the burden of the upkeep of Headquarters, without which our branches could do no effective political work nor be of any political importance.

We have to regret the loss this year of some of our best and oldest supporters, we remember them with gratitude and affection—Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson, Mrs. Louisa Thomson-Price, one of the earliest Directors of the Minerva Publishing Company and Consulting Editor of "The Vote," Mrs. Baillie-Weaver, Mrs. Sharman, Mr. Henry Holiday, Mrs. Lane of Plumstead and Madame Kubler, an indefatigable "Vote" seller and collector. We have new and generous supporters, but their number must be increased and suffragist women must be drawn into our ranks. I specially appeal to our branch members to invite local friends or suitable local women to support our League by a donation and by becoming members just at this present time so full of hope and so loaded with the danger of failure.

Increased money is necessary for there must be no standing still this next year, apparently the crisis of our Cause, and the big push that must be made needs increased funds to carry us over the political-inferiority, first barrier to Women's Freedom.

It is a great pleasure again to give thanks to Miss Reeves and the Minerva Club, to Mrs. Bell, to Miss Berry our splendid "Fair" Hon. Secretary, to Miss Cole, to all our generous voluntary helpers and to our invaluable General Secretary and devoted office Staff.

Secretary's Report.

At the last Annual Conference held at Caxton Hall, Saturday, April 24th 1926, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence was unanimously elected as President of the Women's Freedom League, and Dr. Knight was unanimously re-elected as Hon. Treasurer. Members of the National Executive Committee were elected in the following order: Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., Mrs. Dexter, Miss Anna Munro, Mrs. Juson Kerr, J.P., Miss C. Neal, Scottish representative (Mrs. Fiske, Miss Manclark, Miss Eunice Murray, Miss Spriggs), Miss M. I. Neal, Mrs. Pierotti, Miss Alix M. Clark, Mrs. Flowers, Mrs. Brading and Mrs. Harverson.

Your Committee has met 6 times: April 24th, June 26th, October 9th, February 12th, March 26th, and April 29th.

Appointments: Mrs. Whetton was appointed Hon. Organising Secretary, Mrs. Pierotti, Hon. Head of Literature Department, Miss Underwood, General Secretary; Mr. Gush, Hon. Solicitor to the Women's Freedom League and Miss Homersham, the Auditor.

Branches: We have to record the formation of one new Branch at Darlington, and increased activity in most of our Branches. Our London Branches—Hampstead, Mid-London and Minerva Club have held regular Branch and public meetings during the year and greater activity is reported from Ashford, Bexhill, Deal and Walmer, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Portsmouth, Swansea, Edinburgh, Dunoon and Glasgow. Our Wallasey Branch worked hard for the Peace Pilgrimage, and is still urging the necessity of Women Police upon the local Watch Committee. Our Portsmouth Branch did a very special piece of work last autumn in running Mrs. Poole as a Women's Freedom League candidate for the local Council. A public adoption meeting was held, a mass canvass carried through and the necessity for women on all Councils thoroughly advertised in the district. Middlesbrough Branch worked for the return of Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., to the Council, Miss Anna Munro and Miss Lenton also working for her, while members of our Swansea Branch supported the candidature of Mrs. Samuel.

London Meetings: In London we have vigorously worked for Equal Franchise—beginning the Equal Political Rights Campaign with a Public Meeting on Equal Franchise at Caxton Hall, October 22nd. This was followed by one at the Minerva Café on January 20th, by one at the Minerva Club (organised by our Minerva Club Branch) on February 7th, one at Hampstead (organised by our Hampstead Branch) on February 12th and one at Holloway Public Library (organised by our Mid-London Branch) on March 8th. In each case the Member was asked to receive a Deputation of his constituents on the subject of Equal Franchise, and the Members for Holborn, St. Pancras and Hampstead received Deputations. We have also supported similar meetings organised by the Six Point Group, in Chelsea, by St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance in Marylebone and Fulham, and by the National Union of Women Teachers in Battersea and Clapham District.

Outside London, Ashford, Hastings and Middlesbrough Branches have organised Public Meetings for Equal Franchise, and we have to thank Miss Chave Collisson, M.A., most warmly for kindly going to speak at these meetings in the place of Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence who was unable to go through illness.

Mrs. Mustard has spoken at Stoke Newington, St. George's in the East, Hackney, Croydon and Margate on Equal Franchise and kindred subjects, Miss Reeves at Clapham and Brixton, Miss Collisson, M.A., at Wood Green, Miss Beatrice Pearson at Stoke Newington and Southall, and Miss Underwood at Croydon, East Molesey, Hammersmith, St. Pancras and Ashford.

Mrs. Despard's Birthday Party was held at Caxton Hall on June 30th, when we had the great pleasure of welcoming Mrs. Despard among us. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence presided and short speeches were made by Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Mrs. Mustard, Miss Munro and Dr. Knight.

On November 2nd a very interesting meeting was held at the Minerva Club when Miss Karen Jeppe, League of Nations Commissioner spoke on the sork of rescuing women and children detained against their will in Moslem Harems. A thoroughly successful and enjoyable dinner was held on October 8th at the Holborn Restaurant to commemorate the Silver Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence. Another informal dinner was held at the Minerva Club followed by a King's Speech meeting on Friday, February 11th. The Chair was taken by Dr. Knight and the speakers were Miss Munro, Mrs. Schofield Coates, Mrs. Dexter, Mrs. Zangwill, Mr. Duval, Miss Warriner and Miss Reeves.

In London we took part in the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage Demonstration in Hyde Park, June 19th, members of the League speaking from various platforms in Hyde Park included Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Miss Dorothy Jewson, Miss Munro and Mrs. Nevinson, J.P.

Dr. Knight and Miss E. Berry represented us on the Equal Political Rights Demonstration Committee and we organised a Women's Freedom League contingent of the Suffrage Procession to Hyde Park, led by Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and Dr. Knight on Saturday, July 3rd, the speakers from our platform in Hyde Park being: Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. M. W. Nevinson, J.P., LL.A., Mrs. Mustard, Mrs. Whetton, Mrs. Flowers, Mrs. Zangwill, Miss Godwin, Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., and Alice Park (of California), with Miss Anna Munro in the Chair. Portsmouth Branch sent a brake-load of members to walk in the Procession and take part in the Demonstration; and representatives of other Branches in the Country also walked in this Procession and took part in the Demonstration in Hyde Park. The resolutions, which were carried with acclamation, were as follows:

- (1) That this Mass Demonstration demands an immediate Government measure giving votes to women at 21 on the same terms as men;
- (2) That this Mass Demonstration demands for Peeresses in their own right a seat, a voice and a vote in the House of Lords.

The Green, White and Gold Fair in November and the Spring Sale in

March were run by the 'Fair' Sub-Committee, under the direction of Miss E. Berry, Hon. Secretary to this sub-committee.

Clyde Coast Campaign: Owing to Miss Clark's illness she was unable to organise the Clyde Coast Campaign last year. From July 18th till August 12th, Miss Lenton acted as organiser and speaker and was assisted by Miss Mary McNulty. Whenever weather permitted day meetings were held at Dunoon, Millport and Largs, and evening meetings were held at Rothesay Pier. Literature and VOTES were sold at all meetings.

The Women's Freedom League has co-operated with other women's Societies, whenever possible, as the following paragraphs will show:

International Woman Suffrage Alliance: The Women's Freedom League was well represented at the Tenth Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance held at the Sorbonne, Paris, May 30th to June 6th, by our President, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, our Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Knight, Miss Anna Munro, Miss Underwood, Mrs. Northcroft, Mrs. Mustard and Mrs. Turriff. Our delegates supported those resolutions on the Agenda which were in conformity with the policy of our League, our own two resolutions, which were proposed by Miss Munro, being (1) a demand for women governors and women deputy governors in all prisons for women and girls and all women's sections of prisons, women medical officers in all women's prisons and women inspectors of women's prisons, and women on all Prison Commissions, and (2) strongly recommending that in hospitals containing both men and women patients suffering from illness of body or mind the women shall have full opportunity of treatment by women doctors, and that in the administration of these institutions and the ultimate control of the patients women shall have equal authority and responsibility with men.

National Council of Women. Miss Munro again represented the Women's Freedom League at the Annual Meetings of the National Council of Women held this year in the Church House, Westminster. We succeeded in getting the following resolution on the Agenda, which was proposed by Miss Munro and seconded by Mrs. Hubback and carried by a large majority in spite of an Amendment which was moved by the Aberdeen Branch of the National Council of Women to the effect that the voting age of men and women should be 25: "That the National Council of Women calls upon the Government to introduce and carry into law without delay a simple franchise measure to enfranchise women at the same age and on the same terms as men."

Miss Munro also seconded the following resolution proposed by the National Union of Women Teachers which was also carried: "That the National Council of Women re-affirms its adherence to the principle of equal pay for equal work, accepted by the Nation in payment of Members of Parliament, and calls upon the Government to establish equal rates of payment as between men and women, performing similar duties in the Civil Service and in the teaching profession."

Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations: Dr. Knight, Mrs. Dexter, Mrs. Sadd Brown, Mrs. Northcroft and Miss Underwood continue to serve on the Executive Committee of this Council, and from the Women's Freedom League and through the Council we have urged upon the Government the necessity of sending women as fully accredited delegates to the Assembly of the League and to the International Labour Conference. Dame Edith Lyttelton was appointed as a substitute delegate to the Assembly last year. We have had Questions asked in Parliament on this matter of fully accredited delegates; and we have tried to get women on to the different Commissions and Committees under the League of Nations. We recently met Mr. Grimshaw of the International Labour Organisation at a Meeting organised by the Council and we are hoping to get suitable women on to the Committee of Experts on the subject of Forced Labour. We rejoiced that after the Council's strong recommendation Dame Janet Campbell was

appointed British Expert on the League of Nations Committee on Infant Welfare. We hope to see a British woman on the Health Committee of the League of Nations. When we knew that the Special Body of Experts on the Traffic in Women and Children was about to issue its Report, we wrote to the Secretary of the League of Nations and to Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British representative on the League Council, urging that this Report should be published and made available in all Countries.

Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations: Mrs. Dexter and Miss Underwood have represented the Women's Freedom League at the meetings of this Committee and have supported those resolutions which came within the scope of the League's work and were in accordance with the policy of the Women's Freedom League. We were the first to get an Equal Franchise resolution on the Agenda which called attention to the urgent necessity for getting an Equal Franchise measure introduced and passed into law this Session if it was to reach the Statute Book during the life of this Parliament, because of the difficulty of getting new voters on to the Register in time.

Women's Advisory Council of the League of Nations. Throughout the year Mrs. Dexter has attended the meetings of the Advisory Council and has supported the policy of the Women's Freedom League in the resolutions brought forward for consideration.

British Commonwealth League. Dr. Knight has represented us on this League, which has arranged Conferences attended by members of our League on Migration within the Empire and on Matters of Importance in regard to the Imperial Conference. The British Commonwealth League has also arranged small luncheons, etc., to meet representative women from Overseas.

Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. Mrs. Tanner and Mrs. Ewen have represented us on this Council and furnished your Committee with reports of proceedings of its meetings.

Association of Moral and Social Hygiene. Dr. Knight attended a Conference called by this Association to consider the Public Places (Order) Bill which was later introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

Women's Organisations and the Strike. The Women's Freedom League, at the invitation of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship joined with other women's organisations in their work for Conciliation during the General Strike. We brought out THE VOTE, under great difficulties during the weeks of that Strike. Later, in November, the N.U.S.E.C. called another Conference of Women's Organisations on the Coal Dispute. Dr. Knight and Miss Reeves attended, but the League took no further action in the matter.

Conference on What is the Real Protection of the Woman Worker? Mrs. Dexter and Miss Underwood attended a Conference in Tufton Street, convened by the N.U.S.E.C. on November 26th and supported resolutions opposing any restriction on the work of women which was not imposed on that of men. The next day they attended another Conference, convened by the Standing Joint Committee of Women's Industrial Organisations, on the Factories Bill, and opposed the inclusion of women in the same category as Young Persons for the purpose of restrictions on their employment.

Miss M. I. Neal represented the Women's Freedom League at a meeting and Conference in Manchester convened by the National Council of Women on the Factories Bill and Protective Legislation.

Conference on Overseas Settlement of British Women: Mrs. Hanscomb represented us at this Conference in December last.

League of the Church Militant Requiem Service for Dr. Helen

Hanson. At the invitation of the League of the Church Militant, Dr. Knight, Mrs. Dexter, Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Potter and Miss Underwood represented the Women's Freedom League at this Service on July 20th.

Conference on the Minimum Wage. Mrs. Dexter represented us at this Conference held at the London School of Economics under the auspices of the League of Nations Union.

Municipal Elections: We greatly regret that our members—Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P. in Middlesbrough, Mrs. Poole in Portsmouth, and Mrs. Samuel in Swansea, who put up such gallant fights last November, did not secure election to their local Councils. For **THE VOTE**, we undertook a special piece of work. We circularised every Town Clerk in England, Scotland and Wales and asked him to furnish us with the names of women already on his local Council and the names of women elected to it last November. We published the results of our enquiries in **THE VOTE**, and we are following a similar plan in regard to Women on Rural and Urban District Councils.

Thanks to Workers: The Committee offers its most cordial thanks to Miss M. I. Neal for making such excellent digests of very lengthy Reports on the chief subjects dealt with at the International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress at Paris, and providing our delegates with summaries of these Reports and also for her summaries of various Reports of Conferences held in London, for the use of the Committee, as well as for having undertaken to take charge of all correspondence from the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and to report to the Committee on it. The Committee further offers its most cordial thanks to Miss Lenton and Miss McNulty for their strenuous work on the Clyde Coast Campaign in July and August; to Miss E. Berry for so successfully carrying through all arrangements for our Green, White and Gold Fair in November and our Spring Sale last March; to Dr. Lewin for the use of her house and generous hospitality at this Sale; to Mrs. Evans, Miss Barton, Mrs. Pierotti, Mrs. Potter and Miss Trotter for their invaluable work in our office.

The Committee also gives its warmest thanks to Miss Reeves and the Minerva Club staff for arranging dinners and hospitality for the public meetings we have held there.

Political Report.

Equal Franchise. The great triumph of the year has been the receiving by Mr. Baldwin of a deputation on Equal Franchise—the first Suffrage deputation received by a Prime Minister since 1918. The Women's Freedom League claims a full share in the securing of that triumph. At the last Conference delegates decided that we should try to get the co-operation of all women's organisations to make a united demand for Equal Franchise. Your Committee decided after the Equal Suffrage Procession to and Demonstration in Hyde Park last July, that the Equal Political Rights Demonstration Committee was the one which should undertake the organisation of this united effort to secure Equal Franchise. At two meetings this proposal was discussed by representatives of societies affiliated to this Committee, and it was carried; and since that date we have worked vigorously and unitedly in London and through the branches of affiliated Societies in the Country in the Cause of Equal Franchise holding united public meetings for Equal Franchise under the auspices of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee, arranging deputations of residents in their constituency to local Members of Parliament, urging them to press for an immediate simple Equal Franchise measure giving votes to women at 21 years of age and on the same terms as men, and getting pub-

licity for the question of Equal Franchise in the local Press. Our member, Miss Daisy Solomon, was elected its first Hon. Secretary and Dr. Knight was elected Chairman of its Press Committee, and it was to the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee that Mr. Baldwin's secretary wrote asking that Committee to organise a thoroughly representative deputation to discuss with him on March 8th the question of Equal Franchise. Dr. Knight, who had all through represented the Women's Freedom League on the special sub-committee of the Campaign Committee and together with Miss Underwood on its General Committee most ably represented our League on the Deputation. Immediately after the deputation, the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee held a meeting at the Minerva Club and unanimously passed the following resolution: "This meeting of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee thanks the Prime Minister for receiving the deputation of representatives of women's societies on the question of Equal Franchise, and hopes that the statement which he has promised to make in the House of Commons before Easter will indicate the intention of the Government to introduce immediately and to pass through all its stages into law a simple franchise measure, giving votes to women at 21 and on the same terms as men." The next day the Women's Freedom League issued a statement to the effect that the Government had not yet made up its mind how the Prime Minister's pledge that women should have equal voting rights with men at the next Election is to be carried out; we were convinced that an increasingly intensive campaign throughout the Country on behalf of Equal Franchise was now more necessary than ever, and that we should continue to press for a simple franchise measure giving votes to women at 21 and on the same terms as men to be carried into law this Session. In the meantime we have pledged ourselves and our Branches to take our full share in open-air campaigns for Equal Franchise in the Constituencies this Summer and to take part in a great demonstration in Trafalgar Square one Saturday in July. We have not the slightest sense of security about Equal Franchise until an Equal Franchise measure is actually on the Statute Book.

Kings' Speech. On the day of the Opening of Parliament your Political Sub-Committee met, and passed the following resolution, a copy of which we sent to the Prime Minister and Home Secretary: "That this meeting expresses extreme indignation that the King's Speech contained no reference to the Government's explicit pledge that women should have equal voting rights with men at the next Election and calls upon the Government to honour its pledge by immediately passing into law a simple franchise measure enfranchising women at 21 years of age and on the same terms as men." In the Debate on the King's Speech, Lady Astor and other Members referred to the omission of Equal Franchise. Several of them asked the Government to set up a Conference. We gave extracts of all these speeches in **THE VOTE**, wrote an article on "Scrap the Conference," wrote thanking each member for her or his mention of the omission, enclosing copy of **THE VOTE** with the extract and our article marked, and said we appealed to all our friends inside and outside the House of Commons to cease talking about a Conference and to press for an immediate franchise measure giving votes to women at 21 years of age and on the same terms as men, for that was the only thing that would help us.

Peeresses Bill. This Bill came up again for its Second Reading, moved by Lord Astor in the House of Lords on June 24th, and was rejected by 125 votes to 80. Before that date we wrote to 36 members of the Upper House asking them to support this Bill. We took great exception to the speeches of two members of the House of Lords, and sent the following resolution to the Consultative Committee, which was passed unanimously and copies sent to the two Lords in question, to the Prime Minister and to the Lord Chancellor: "That the Societies mentioned below protest in the most emphatic terms against the tone of the speeches of both Lord Birkenhead and Lord Newton during the Debate on the Second Reading of the Peeresses'

Bill on June 24th, and regard it as a public scandal that Lord Birkenhead, a paid servant of both men and women, should take advantage of his privileged position as a member of a non-elective Chamber to insult women." We gave a summary of the speeches made by their Lordships on this occasion and sent a marked copy of THE VOTE to each Member taking part in the Debate.

Honours List. Some time before the Honours List was issued last Summer we wrote to Mr. Baldwin asking him to include women as well as men in the forthcoming Honours List, and to see that women had a share of the more important honours and were not given only minor honours as has hitherto been the case. After the issue of that Honours List and again of the New Year Honours List we sent a protest against the meagre number and unimportance of honours bestowed upon women, pointing out once again to the Prime Minister that the Government should act impartially as between its men and women citizens in the bestowal of Honours as in other matters.

Ministry of Labour. We have had correspondence with the Ministry of Labour on the subject of sending a woman as a fully accredited delegate to the International Labour Conference at Geneva in May, when Health Insurance and a minimum Wage standard will appear on the Agenda—both questions of importance to women. We had a reply to the effect that a woman technical adviser would probably be sent—they are bound to do that by Par. 2 of Art. 389 of the International Labour Organisation when any question of special concern to women is to come up. We again urged that a woman should be sent as a fully accredited delegate, and Mr. Livingstone asked a question about the matter in the House of Commons. To him the Ministry's reply was that the Government had to consider which was the best person to send and in this case it "happens to be a man." Last year when we were pressing the Minister of Labour in view of the fact that there were practically as many unemployed girls as unemployed boys in the Country, to appoint an adequate number of suitable and experienced women to a Departmental Committee "to inquire into and advise upon the public system of Education in England and Wales in relation to the requirements of trade and industry, with particular reference to the adequacy of the arrangements for enabling young persons to enter and retain suitable employment," he replied he thought the proper principle was to get hold of the "best brains" for his Committees. So he appointed 8 men and one woman, who subsequently resigned. We wrote about the whole matter in THE VOTE and sent a marked copy to the Minister of Labour which was duly acknowledged.

Women on the Prison Commission: Mr. Briant asked the Home Secretary a question on this subject who replied that, like his predecessors, he did not see his way to appoint a Woman Prison Commissioner. In an article in THE VOTE we expressed our views on this subject, the appointment of women governors of women's prisons, and women in the higher administrative posts in connection with our prison system, sent a marked copy to Sir Wm. Joynson-Hicks and again received an acknowledgment. Since the issue of the Prison Commissioner's Report this month we have again written on this subject in THE VOTE, again communicated with the Home Secretary on the necessity for women on the Prison Commission and as Governors of all women's prisons and women's sections of prisons, and are arranging for further questions in the House of Commons.

Women Police. Throughout the year we have seized every available opportunity to press for the appointment of more women police, by writing to the Home Secretary, and by articles and paragraphs in THE VOTE. We received from the Home Office a copy of the Home Secretary's Circular on the subject to local governing authorities, and we published this Circular in THE VOTE.

Girls of Fiji. At our request on the 8th of March Mr. Pethick-Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the facilities for educa-

tion of Indian children in Fiji are available for girls as well as boys, and whether, on the Commission he is appointing to consider the question, it is proposed to include any women members. Mr. Amery replied that the facilities for the education of Indian boys and girls do exist. The Governor of the Colony was appointing the Commission and he promised to inquire if it would include women members. Later Mr. Amery informed Mr. Lawrence that the Governor had reported it was not his intention to appoint a woman to sit as a member of the Education Commission. We wrote to the Colonial Office protesting against the Governor's decision in this matter, and urging Mr. Amery to point out to the Governor the advisability of having women on this Commission.

Deaths of Women in Childbirth. At the suggestion of our President we took up the matter of the women who had died from septicæmia in Kingston. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence asked a question on this subject in the House of Commons, Dr. Knight dealt with it in THE VOTE, and we wrote to the Minister of Health urging him to use his powers so that women secure better protection in future.

Sex Disqualification in Burma. At our request also Mr. Pethick-Lawrence asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to the Speech of the Home Member in the Burmese Legislative Council, in opposing the eligibility of Burmese Women to the Council and whether he was expressing the views of the Government in this opposition. Earl Winterton replied that the Home Member, who is a Burman, opposed the motion on behalf of the Government on the ground that it was premature, and might well await the Statutory enquiry.

Nationality of Married Women. Before the recent Imperial Conference took place in London we wrote to all those taking part in it on the question of the Nationality of Married Women and the necessity for securing the equal enfranchisement of women with men throughout the British Empire. We had most courteous and very interesting letters from the Dominion Premiers in acknowledgment of our communication.

Lead Paint (Protection from Poisoning) Bill. Clause 2 of this Bill read: "On and after the 19th day of November 1927, it shall not be lawful to employ any woman or young person in painting any part of a building with lead paint." We opposed this Clause so far as adult women were concerned at every stage of the Bill, and before it came into the Upper House we wrote its Members asking them to oppose it. Several of them did and a small concession was made excluding from this prohibition those women who were now already working in this trade. After the Debate, we gave extracts in THE VOTE of the speeches made on this Bill by Members of the House of Lords, and sent marked copies of our paper to them with a letter of thanks when they had taken our point of view.

Married Women (Employment) Bill. This Bill, the object of which is to prevent women from being dismissed, or called upon to resign, because of marriage, by the Government or local governing Authorities, has been introduced into the House of Commons by Sir Robert Newman, and comes up for its Second Reading on April 29th. We are supporting this Bill in every way possible and have asked our Branches to get support for it in their districts and from their local Member. We wrote a letter of appreciation to Sir Robert for bringing in this Bill and we recently held a public meeting at the Minerva Club in support of it, with Sir Robert Newman, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence and Miss Chrystal Macmillan as speakers, Mrs. Mustard occupying the Chair.

Women and the Shop Acts. When we learned that the Home Office was appointing a Departmental Committee to inquire into the working of the Shop Acts, we wrote to Sir William Joynson-Hicks urging that, in view

of the great numbers of women employed in shops, an adequate number of women should be appointed to this Committee. Thirteen men and *two women*—Miss Irwin, C.B.E., Vice-President of our Glasgow Branch, and Mrs. Hilton Philipson, M.P., have been appointed to it.

Women on the Emigration Committee. We congratulated Miss Margaret Bondfield, M.P., and Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, J.P.; on their appointment to this Committee of the International Labour Organisation.

Mrs. Philipson and Nursing Homes Bill. We congratulated Mrs. Philipson on winning a place for this Bill.

Women and Juries. We have supported in *THE VOTE* our Irish suffrage friends in their fight against women being excluded from Jury Service in Ireland, and we have published letters and articles on this subject from Mrs. Despard, Miss Dora Mellone and Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington.

After the Hesketh-Pearson case in this Country we protested to the Lord Chancellor and to the Recorder, Sir Robert Wallace, against part of the evidence in this case being withheld from the two women jurors—photographs and drawings which it was considered necessary for the men jurors to see were not shown to women. We urged that women on all juries were not there as women but as jurors.

Hon. Organising Secretary's Report.

Regular reports have been received during the year from our two organisers, Miss White and Miss Lenton. Miss White is still working in the South Eastern district and has done steady, reliable work in Ashford, Bexhill and Hastings. Regular branch meetings have been held, and at Ashford an address has been given after the business has been transacted. The Rev. E. A. Mobbs was the speaker at a meeting arranged by the Bexhill branch and also at a combined meeting with the Bexhill Sisterhood when his subject was "Parents and Children." Successful meetings have been held on Equal Franchise at Ashford and Hastings, with Miss Chave Collisson, M.A., as principal speaker. The resolution demanding Votes for Women at the same age as men was carried unanimously. All three branches have organised Whist Drives to raise funds for local work, and these have been very successful both socially and financially. For the Whist Drives at Bexhill, Miss Skinner very kindly lent a room at the Albany Hotel. In the summer, garden meetings were held at Hastings and Ashford, by kind invitation of Mrs. Prelooker and Mrs. Kither and Mrs. Knock respectively. 18 new members were made at the Garden Party at Hastings and several at Ashford. Miss White visited most of the members and succeeded in collecting donations for the Birthday Fund. A New Year's Party at Mrs. Darent Harrison's was a great success. The branches took part in the Peace Pilgrimage and Miss White represented the Women's Freedom League on the joint committee. Miss White organised the South Eastern Branches Stall at the Fair. Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Finch, of Ashford, helped her as stallholders. A delegate from each branch attended the Annual Conference.

During the year Miss Lenton has divided her time between Scotland (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dunoon and Rothesay) and Middlesbrough and Darlington. She was working in Edinburgh until June 7th, and organised a successful public meeting at which Miss Eunice Murray spoke on Women in the Ministry.

On June 7th she went to Middlesbrough and during her stay there held open air meetings at Middlesbrough, Darlington, Stockton and Redcar and sold *THE VOTE*. Owing to Miss Clark's illness, Miss Lenton conducted the Clyde Coast Campaign with the help of Miss McNulty. During the campaign 31 open air meetings were held, 1,553 copies of *THE VOTE* were sold (an

average of 388 per week) and £11 9s. 4d. worth of literature. New members were made. After the Clyde Coast Campaign Miss Lenton visited Darlington in September, where she made new members and sympathisers, and organised a public meeting at which Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., was the principal speaker. She also held an open air meeting at Stockton. In October the Darlington Branch was officially opened at a Drawing Room Meeting at the Polan Hall, by kind invitation of Mrs. Baynes, at which Miss Anna Munro spoke. Miss Lenton also re-organised the Middlesbrough Branch, with Miss Holmes, B.A., as Hon. Sec. She helped Mrs. Schofield Coates in her Municipal Election Campaign by canvassing and other work. On leaving Middlesbrough, Miss Lenton returned to Scotland to take up her work in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dunoon. Members' meetings were held in Glasgow, and to raise funds Whist Drives were held in Edinburgh and Glasgow. New members were made in Glasgow and Dunoon and *THE VOTE* sold. A public meeting was held at Dunoon and also at Glasgow, at which Miss Nina Boyle and Miss Eunice Murray were the speakers. Dunoon branch seems to be well established and officers were appointed after the public meeting.

Literature Report.

The Total Cash Receipts during the year were £126 7s. 2d., which is a slight improvement on last year. These are made up as follows: General £73 0s. 11d., Branches £3 4s. 4d., Organisers £14 14s. 4d., Other Societies £1 11s. 6d., Sales at Office £16 7s., Sales at meetings £17 9s. 1d. The Organisers item includes £11 9s. 4d. for pamphlets sold on the Clyde Coast Campaign, and we are very grateful to Miss Lenton for her help in disposing of this literature for us.

The Literature Department published the Women's Freedom League Diary, which sold well.

Our takings at the Literature Stall at the Green, White and Gold Fair this year amounted to £16 2s. 5d., and in addition we took orders to the value of £6 11s. 10d.

In the summer Dr. Knight generously presented the Department with a large stock of W.F.L. badges, and we shall be glad if our Branches and members will help us to sell these badges, price 3d.

We are anxious to dispose of our remaining stock of "What We Have and What We Want," and "British Women M.Ps.," and hope that the Branches will not lose any opportunity of pushing the sale of these pamphlets at meetings, etc.

"Vote" Report.

In presenting *THE VOTE* report for the past year we regret to record that *THE VOTE* sales for the year show a slight decrease, the reason for this being that Miss Alix Clark was prevented, through illness, from participating in the annual National Union of Teachers Conference and the Clyde Coast Campaign. Apart from this *THE VOTE* sales show an increase.

During the year we have welcomed new subscribers. In London we now have a regular *VOTE* seller.

From Headquarters we have continued to take advantage of every opportunity to introduce our paper to fresh readers.

Meetings in London have been attended and *THE VOTE* sold by our *VOTE* seller and volunteers. The Peace and Suffrage Processions last Summer afforded good opportunities for the selling of *THE VOTE*; 1,045 copies were sold at the Peace Procession and 763 at the Suffrage Procession. We offer our sincere thanks to all friends who helped so magnificently with the sale of *THE VOTE* on these two occasions. Public selling is one of the

most important and effective ways of making our paper known, and as we are always in need of volunteers for this branch of our work we take this opportunity of making a very special appeal to all members who have any time they can give to help us.

We should like to urge our Branches to decide that in the coming year they will not be content merely to contemplate the difficulty of disposing of a regular weekly supply, but that they will do just that little more that is necessary to stimulate the interest of members and friends so that we may have the co-operation that is so vitally needed if we are to make **THE VOTE** self-supporting.

We have been enabled to continue the special fortnightly feature of **THE VOTE**, namely, first hand news of women's activities in France, Germany and the Scandinavian Countries, by the kind assistance of our two members Miss Marian Berry and Miss Alice Farmer, in translating news received from these countries. To Miss Berry and Miss Farmer we offer our warmest thanks for these translations which are greatly appreciated by our readers.

Letters of appreciation still continue to arrive from Readers in this Country, and from Africa, America, Australia, Austria, Canada, Iceland, India, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, etc. These letters confirm our confidence that **THE VOTE** is the best and cheapest paper on the market which deals solely with women's interests and which never departs from its ideal to secure for women their full emancipation. Introduce it then to your friends—for it is probably just the paper that they are looking for. Specimen copies will be sent to any friend on receipt of a Post Card addressed to **THE VOTE** Secretary at this office. A number of indoor and open-air meetings will be held in London and various parts of the country during the coming months. Go yourself and get your friends to help sell **THE VOTE** at these meetings. These are some of the ways in which you can help. Others will suggest themselves to you. In whatever way you can, please help us in the coming months to make a big push to make our paper known, to extend its influence and to increase its circulation.

The League has sustained a great loss through the death of two splendid pioneers. We deeply regret the death of Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson last October, one of the first shareholders of the Minerva Publishing Company, and a contributor to and constant reader of **THE VOTE**; also of Mrs. Thomson-Price last June. Mrs. Thomson-Price was not only a Shareholder, but at one time was consulting Editor and Director of **THE VOTE** and will be remembered by her clever Political caricatures and the excellent sketches of topical events so splendidly executed by her and published in **THE VOTE** during the early years of its appearance.

To Mrs. Evans, Miss Barton and Mrs. Pierotti we tender our sincere and grateful thanks for their continued help in the office during the year, without which the distribution of **THE VOTE** would be seriously handicapped.

Branches.

HAMPSTEAD.

The work of the Branch has been steadily maintained throughout the year. Several new members have joined. Five Members' Meetings have been held during the year, the Misses Berry, Dr. Knight, and Miss Lyndon kindly giving the use of their houses for these meetings. The Branch tenders its most sincere thanks to Mrs. Harverson for giving the use of the Isis Club for meetings on various occasions; to Miss Goodliffe, Miss Lyndon, and Miss Vibert for undertaking the Branch Stall at the Green, White and Gold Fair, and to the *Hampstead and Highgate Express* for reporting meetings on several occasions. The Annual meeting of the Branch was held by the kindness of Mrs. Harverson at the Isis Club on June 14th. Dr. Knight

presided, and the Hon. Officers, Miss Lyndon (Hon. Treasurer), and Miss E. Berry (Hon. Secretary), were re-elected; afterwards Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence gave a most interesting address on the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage, and the Equal Political Rights Demonstration on July 3rd, Alice Park also spoke on Women's Work in different countries that she had visited. The Social Gathering of Members and friends of the Branch was held by kind invitation of Mrs. Harverson at the Isis Club on January 26th. Commandant Mary Allen spoke on 'The present position of Women Police in this country and on the Continent.' Mrs. Wynne Nevinson, J.P., presided, and Miss Joan Dunsford gave songs and recitations. A Public Meeting on behalf of the Equal Political Rights Campaign was organised by the Branch, at the Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, on February 17th. Dr. Knight presided, and Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, M.P., kindly spoke in the place of Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, who unfortunately was too unwell to be present. The other speakers were Mrs. Costello (Conservative and Unionist Women's Advisory Committee), Mrs. Joyce Pollard (The League of the Church Militant), Mr. Joseph Clayton, F.R.Hist.S. (St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance), Miss Myra Sadd Brown (Hampstead Branch member), Miss B. Godwin (Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries), and Miss L. Pierotti (National Union of Women Teachers). A resolution was sent from the meeting to the Prime Minister, The Home Secretary, and the local member, Mr. George Balfour. The Branch sent a contribution to Mrs. Despard's Birthday Fund; and also provided two stalls (one for Handkerchiefs, one for Antiques and White Elephants) at the Green, White and Gold Fair. On several occasions the Branch has sent letters and resolutions on Housing and various matters to the Hampstead Borough Council. Members of the Branch both worked for, and took part in, the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage Procession on June 19th, and the Equal Political Rights Procession and Demonstration on July 3rd. The Hon. Officers trust that during the coming year the Branch will increase its membership, and thus be able to do more towards promoting the equality of women in all public matters in the Borough and surrounding neighbourhood than it has been able to do in the past.

MID-LONDON.

During the year the Branch has again been active and has enrolled a number of fresh members. Most of the energy of the Branch has been used for propaganda work, with the one goal in view, to secure for women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men.

Fresh from the Conference the Branch took advantage of the fact that so many good speakers would be in Town, to arrange a Public meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday morning, April 24th. We were fortunate in getting our retiring President, Miss Anna Munro, to speak, and Miss McLelland to take the Chair and to address the meeting after Miss Munro.

Moreover the Branch has supplied speakers for outside meetings on the work of the Women's Freedom League. Our best thanks are due to Miss Pearson, Mrs. Ewen and Mrs. Mustard for so kindly attending these meetings.

Next the Birthday Party. This again saw the Branch at work. A Pound and Produce Stall appeared at the Birthday Party stocked and managed by the members of the Branch. This together with the donations given by the members resulted in the sum of £13 10s. 0d. being handed to Headquarters.

Open air meetings were held in Hyde Park which helped to prepare the way for the Demonstration and Procession held on July 3rd. For this we supplied helpers, a Speaker and a Chairman.

At the annual Green, White and Gold Fair held in November, we undertook the Stationery Stall, which again resulted in the sum of £20 15s. 8d. being added to Headquarter funds.

Immediately after Christmas we began work in Highbury, members distributing handbills at the various offices of the political parties and in the district. This work culminated in a Public Meeting which was held at the

Central Library, Holloway Road, on March the 8th, to demand Votes for Women at the same age and on the same terms as men.

This meeting was well attended and was presided over by Mrs. Mustard. Miss Matusch, Dr. Ethel Bentham, prospective Labour candidate for the division, Miss Chave Collisson, M.A., Miss Underwood, and Mr. Pethick-Lawrence were the Speakers. Mr. Comyns Carr, K.C., prospective Liberal candidate for the division, was unavoidably absent through illness. Resolutions calling for Votes for women and that Major Tasker the local M.P., should be asked to receive a deputation from his constituents on Equal Franchise were passed with acclamation.

We offer our best thanks to all members who have made this record possible, either by their gifts or services.

MINERVA CLUB.

During the year the branch held three Public Meetings, the first on Sunday July 4th, at which the branch celebrated its birthday. Mrs. Despard, the branch President, was in the chair, and short speeches were made by several members and friends.

The second meeting was on Tuesday, November 2nd, when Miss Karen Jeppe was the speaker, and the third was on Monday, February 7th, 1927, which was one of a series under the Equal Political Rights campaign, and as well as some of our own members there were several speakers from other societies.

Several branch business meetings were held during the year. The branch increased its membership and was represented by two delegates at the Conference.

Members of the branch have helped with the various activities at headquarters, and took part in the procession for Equal Political Rights in July.

The branch has helped with the catering at the various functions held by the Women's Freedom League, and almost all the members, helped with preparing and serving the teas and suppers at the Green, White and Gold Fair.

ASHFORD.

Regular meetings have been held during the year including one public meeting on February 23rd, when Miss Collisson, M.A., spoke on "Equal Suffrage." The speaker on September 24th was Miss Wallace, Assistant Commissioner for the National Savings Association. A branch was opened known as the Ashford Branch, Women's Freedom League Savings Association and 18 members enrolled. On November 26th a resolution was passed unanimously and forwarded to the A.U.D.C. urging upon the Council the necessity for houses (similar to those granted by the government for the military) for urgent cases of overcrowding, of which there is ample evidence in this town. A letter has been received stating that the matter has been placed before the Housing Committee. We have added new members during the year.

BEXHILL.

Monthly meetings, tea and whist drives have been held at the Albany Hotel, by kind permission of Miss Skinner. Speakers—Councillor Mrs. Meads, Miss Thornton, Rev. E. A. Mobbs, Miss Anna Munro, Mrs. Miles and Mrs. Shoemith. The sad death of Mrs. Bryan prevented us from having our usual delightful meeting in the summer. Last November members helped in Mrs. Shoemith's fight for the Town Council. The Green, White and Gold Fair received good support from Bexhill. New members have been made.

DEAL AND WALMER.

The Deal and Walmer Branch is progressing though not as quickly as we could wish. Some good work has been done in writing to the local Member

of Parliament at the request from Headquarters, the Home Secretary and others.

On November 25th, 1926, a meeting open to friends as well as members, was held in Deal, when Miss Tooke, J.P., spoke on various subjects connected with the Causes of women, telling us much about her work as J.P. in a place where the influence of women is apparently much needed. On February 5th, 1927, another meeting of the same kind, open to others beside members, was held in Deal, when Mrs. Wynne Nevinson, J.P., spoke on "What the Vote has done for Women," and Mrs. Juson Kerr, J.P., ably showed the need for an extended Franchise so as to give the "under thirties" a chance. In July of last year a Bridge Drive was given in a private garden, which resulted in a decided augmentation of our funds. Owing to this and other ways of increasing our local funds we were enabled this year to send our 'little bit' to the Headquarters, and so do our 'little bit' in helping on the work of the League. Some of our efforts have been concentrated on the Humane-killing of animals for food, and we hope eventually to persuade the Town Council either to erect a public abattoir, or to make the use of the humane-killer compulsory in the neighbourhood. An appeal to all animal lovers was made through the press and met with response.

HASTINGS.

Monthly meetings: Public Meeting, Grand Hotel, Hastings (January), Speaker, Miss Anna Munro, Chair, Mrs. Darent Harrison. Subject: "The Political Situation." Public Meeting, Grand Hotel (February), Mrs. Matters Porter, Chair, Mrs. Darent Harrison. Subject: "Has Woman Creative and Constructive Ability?" Drawing Room Meeting (March) at 1, St. Paul's Place, subject: "League of Nations." Public Meeting, Grand Hotel (April). Mrs. Miles, Chair, Mrs. Harrison. Hastings members were very prominent in the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage, Mrs. Darent Harrison, Miss Kate Rance, Mrs. Prelooker and Mrs. Mellis were the most prominent workers. Mrs. Prelooker represented this Branch at our Annual Conference.

A very successful garden party was held at Rossiana, Pine Avenue, Ore, in August. Mr. and Mrs. Prelooker welcomed nearly a hundred guests. Speeches were made by some of those who went on the Peace Pilgrimage. A substantial collection went towards defraying some of the expenses incurred by the Pilgrimage. Many new members joined the League.

MIDDLESBROUGH.

Seven Branch and four Committee Meetings have been held. In June, members and friends spent an enjoyable afternoon at "Agecroft," Mrs. Schofield-Coates, J.P., kindly lending her garden for the party. In the autumn, Miss Lenton visited members and sympathisers and interest in the League was renewed, several new members being enrolled. On March 1st, a tea and entertainment was given in the Temperance Institute, Woodlands Road. A Public Meeting has been arranged for Thursday, 31st March, in the Town Hall, at which Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Miss Chave Collisson, M.A., and others will speak.

PORTSMOUTH.

The report for 1926—1927 shews a number of activities and a good record of work done. The outstanding event was running Mrs. Poole as a W.F.L. candidate for the City Council last November. A vigorous campaign was conducted, but unfortunately Mrs. Poole was not successful. Portsmouth took charge of the "Household Stall" at the "Fair," and Mrs. Brading and Mrs. Poole were the stall-holders. Owing to the election the usual work-parties could not be held, but the members generously gave articles for the Stall. To raise our donation of £5 to the Birthday Fund, Mrs. Brading kindly gave a Whist Drive at her house, and Mrs. Whitehead invited the members to tea at her bungalow at Rowlands Castle. The remainder was subscribed by the members. To help the branch funds Mrs.

Cory gave an "At Home" which was very successful, and Mrs. Slatter gave her Annual Garden Whist Drive. A Jumble Sale and a Whist Drive were also organised. 30 copies of THE VOTE are taken weekly.

WALLASEY.

We had five public meetings during the year and nine Committee meetings. A resolution was sent to the Town Clerk asking the Watch Committee to consider the advisability of employing women police. Mrs. Panter Brick and Mrs. Andain waited on the Chief Constable stating our reasons for wishing to have women police employed for preventative and rescue work. Resolutions were sent to the Home Secretary and Sir Benton Chadwick, M.P., asking the former to bring in a simple measure for Equal Franchise.

The Town Clerk was asked again to consider the claims of the unemployed men and women to staff the polling booths at the Municipal Elections.

We took the initiative locally in forming a Committee for the Peace-makers' Pilgrimage as a result of Mrs. Shilston Watkins' address outlining the aims and objects of the Pilgrimage, Mrs. Andain was elected Secretary of the Contingent.

A letter was sent to Sir Benton Chadwick, M.P., asking him to support Miss Wilkinson's Bill to compel Chief Constables to employ women police in cities and county boroughs.

The Hon. Branch Secretary would like to thank personally those members who have so kindly lent their rooms for Whist Drives and given refreshments and prizes:—Mesdames Simpson, Stern, Smith, Preston, Soutar, Parry, Brick and Rogers.

EDINBURGH.

Six Branch Meetings and three Committee meetings have been held. Two public meetings, both of which were well attended were organised by Miss Lenton. We have also had a Whist Drive, and a Dramatic Entertainment. We supported other Societies in organising a Franchise Meeting.

GLASGOW.

After the big "Women in the Church" meeting in the early part of 1926, the Glasgow Branch decided that it was no longer possible to expect to run successful indoor meetings in Glasgow until the following autumn. The committee arranged a river picnic to end in open-air meetings in Dunoon and other places for May, but this had to be abandoned owing to the effect of the coal dispute on the Clyde Steamer Service.

In the early autumn the illness of the Hon. Sec., Mrs. Fiske, prevented much work. The Branch sent its sincere sympathy and thanks for all that Mrs. Fiske had done during her term of office, to the Hon. Secretary.

In November Miss Lenton (organiser) called a Branch Meeting, at which it was decided to have a Whist Drive on January 15th, 1927, in the Athenæum Restaurant. This was quite a success, one hundred people turning up, and a profit of £10 5s. being realised. Miss Eunice Murray presided, and at the end Bailie Mrs. Bell proposed a "Vote of Thanks" to her for all she had done and was doing.

Early in March a General Meeting of the Branch was held in the Grosvenor Restaurant at which Miss Eunice Murray was re-appointed President, Mrs. Mosen became Hon. Secretary, and Mrs. Curdie, Hon. Treas., the five Vice-Presidents were re-elected, and a strong committee was formed.

Two public meetings were held in the McLellan Galleries, the first addressed by Miss Nina Boyle, and the second by Miss Anna Munro. At both Miss Eunice Murray presided.

On the 22nd of April there was another Branch Meeting, when Miss McLellan was in the chair, at which resolutions for the Conference were voted upon, and Mrs. Mosen, the Delegate, given final instructions.

At this meeting it was decided to have a Jumble Sale in May, a Cake and

Candy Fair in June, and Miss Mina MacDonald very kindly undertook to organise a Drawing Room Concert, also for May.

ROTHESAY.

Owing to the ill-health of the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Miss Park, very little took place during this year.

There was a very enthusiastic and well attended meeting during Easter week, 1926, when Miss Eunice Murray spoke on "Equal Opportunities Everywhere," and Councillor Miss Arrol was in the chair. Several new members were enrolled.

About a year later Miss Anna Munro spoke to a very appreciative audience in "Fair Play for the Weaker (?) Sex"; Miss Arrol, the local W.F.L. President again presiding.

Occasionally, when the organiser was in the neighbourhood, local members helped with open-air meetings on the front.

MONTGOMERY BOROUGH.

Owing to the serious and prolonged illness and absence from Wales of the Hon. Secretary, Miss Alix Clark, very little local work was done, but members and friends of the branch contributed £12 to the Birthday Fund, ices to the Birthday Party and 5 guineas to the Equal Political Rights Campaign, also sending up a general and a Welsh produce Stall to the "Green, White and Gold Fair."

SWANSEA.

In addition to our Annual Meeting we have had Committee and Branch Meetings.

Women's Freedom League.

Branch and District Funds, 1926.

	£	s.	d.
Hampstead	31	13	7
Mid-London	45	4	6
Minerva Club.. .. .	10	5	0
Thames Valley	1	6	7
Ashford	9	16	11
Bexhill	4	5	0
Brighton	5	7	0
Darlington	4	3	6
Deal and Walmer	10	11	4
Hastings	6	2	8
Middlesbrough	2	0	2
Portsmouth	20	19	2
Wallasey	14	6	10
Dunoon	2	18	10
Edinburgh	12	6	5
Glasgow	37	6	10
Montgomery Boroughs	22	11	0
Swansea	12	12	11
	253 18 3		
Headquarters Funds	2044	16	3
Total Funds, 1926	£2298 14 6		

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I bequeath to the Honorary Treasurer or Treasurers for the time being of the Women's Freedom League the sum of*

(free of legacy duty) to be applied for the general purposes of the said Women's Freedom League, free of all deductions whatever, the receipt of the said Honorary Treasurer or Treasurers to be an effectual discharge of the same.

Signature _____

**The sum to be written in full.*

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