

THE VOTE,  
JANUARY 10, 1919.  
ONE PENNY.

# Women Voters and the Coalition Victory

E. M. N. C.

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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**OBJECT:** To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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## WHAT WE EXPECT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

**"It will be the duty of the new Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women."**

ELECTION MANIFESTO, signed by

MR. LLOYD GEORGE, Prime Minister.

MR. BONAR LAW, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

## NO SHIRKING!

**I**f you Believe in Equal Rights and Opportunities and an Equal Moral Standard for Women and Men,

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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.



#### DARE TO BE FREE.

Political meeting in Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Five minutes' speeches on "My Suggestions for the King's Speech." Discussion to follow.

Wednesday, January 22.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. G. K. Devadhar, M.A. Subject: "The Poona Seva Sadan as an Example of how Indian Women are Helping Themselves." Chair, Miss A. A. Smith.

Wednesday, January 29.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Abadam. Subject: "A New Menace."

Tuesday, February 4, 7 p.m.—Political Meeting, in Minerva Café, "What We Think of the King's Speech."

Wednesday, February 5, 8 p.m.—Annual Meeting, Golder's Green Branch, at 5, East Holm, Addison-way.

Wednesday, February 5.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Whish. Subject: "The Humorous Side of Journalism."

Wednesday, February 12.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. M. W. Nevinson. Subject: "Election Experiences."

Thursday, February 13, 7 p.m., in Minerva Café, Conference on "The Endowment of Motherhood."

Saturday, February 15, 10.30 a.m.—National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Saturday, March 15, 10.30 a.m.—National Executive Committee Meeting at 144, High Holborn.

Friday, April 4.—National Executive Committee Meeting.

Saturday, April 5, 10 a.m.—Annual Conference of the Women's Freedom League.

#### PROVINCES.

Monday, January 13.—Westcliffe Branch: Meeting at 30, Satanita-road, on "The State Regulation of Vice."

Wednesday, January 22.—Portsmouth. Practice Debating Class, 2, Kent-road, 3.15 p.m. Discussion: "The Use of Sermons." Opener: Mrs. Layton. Chair: Mrs. White.

Friday, January 25.—Bexhill. Speakers' Class at 19, Marine-mansions, 3.15 p.m. Hostess: Mrs. Williams.

Tuesday, January 28.—Manchester. Political Meeting for Women only at Milton Hall, Deansgate, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Maude Illingworth (Liberal Women's Organiser). Subject: "Peace—and After." Open discussion. Admission free. Silver collection.

#### OTHER SOCIETIES.

MONTGOMERY BOROUGHS CAMPAIGN, third week in January. Speaker: Mrs. Margaret Wynne Nevinson. Hon. Organiser: Miss Alix M. Clark. Further particulars next week.

Miss Margaret Hodge's Lectures.—Monday, January 20.—"The Historical Origin and Ethical Value of Nursery Rhymes," Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C.1, 3 p.m.

Monday, January 27.—"The Origin and History of Modern Popular Sayings and Some Modern Slang," Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C.1, 3 p.m.

Thursday, February 6.—British Dominions Women Citizens' Union, Indian Section, Minerva Café.—Debate on the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Admission 1s., including tea. 3-6 p.m.

Monday, February 24.—Women Writers' Suffrage League Annual Meeting at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Miss Maude Royden preaches at the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, E.C., next Sunday at the 6.30 p.m. service. Subject: "The Kind of World We Want: II., The Purpose of God."

## STILL THE ENGROSSING TOPIC: Women at the Polls.

The Press and the public are still busy discussing the experiences of women candidates for Parliament, and the forecasts for the future indicate that not only is it necessary for women to take their places at Westminster if legislation is to be wise and just, but that it will not be very long before the desire becomes a reality. The attitude of women candidates was clearly shown at the Women's Freedom League dinner on January 3, reported on page 45, that the results of the General Election were a stimulus to immediate effort and organisation. The life of the new Parliament, in spite of its big Unionist Coalition majority, is not expected to be long, and the women's watchword is "Ready, aye ready!" for the next General Election, as well as bye-elections.

It must be remembered that although the House of Commons passed the Bill enabling women to sit in Parliament by the overwhelming victory of 274 to 25 on October 23, 1918, the House of Lords did not finish its part of the business until November 15, and the Bill only received the Royal Assent in the expiring days of the last Parliament. Three weeks are all too short to run an election campaign, and in many constituencies women candidates were adopted a week later. The Election took place on Dec. 14.

The position at present is very different; women stand now on an equality with men as to the right to become members of Parliament. All uncertainty is removed; the field is open. It can scarcely be said yet that it is a fair field and no favour, as prejudice is still strong, and must needs be overcome by determined and continuous work. Victory will have to be fought for, but suffragists are accustomed to hard fights, never despairing of the triumph to be. This is their attitude now. It is the duty of women to rally to their aid without delay. Spade work among the electors has to be done, and Parliament must remove the ridiculous restriction on the age of women voters, so that the enthusiasm and hope of the young generation may be felt in a truly representative Parliament. The added restriction of excluding women over thirty who occupy furnished rooms must be swept into the limbo of forgotten things: it is the woman, not her surroundings, that must count.

Politicians and Press are also busy analysing the returns of the General Election and deducing all sorts of arguments therefrom. *The Times'* final summary shows that the difference in actual votes polled for and against the Coalition is less than half a million, despite the big majority in Coalition Seats. The figures are as follows:—

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| For the Coalition...     | 5,091,528 |
| Against the Coalition... | 4,589,486 |

Attempts have been made to show that women did not support the women candidates. This is true to a certain extent, but, as we pointed out last week, conditions were abnormal: the choice resolved itself virtually into a vote for or against the Prime Minister as the man who won the war and must be chosen as the man to win the peace. This, of course, was in addition to the difficulty of meeting the prejudice against a new idea: the woman member of Parliament. On this question Miss Mary Macarthur writes in *The Daily News*:—

The failure of the women candidates, with one exception, to secure election is taken by some people as indicating the disinclination of women to be represented by women. But there is very little evidence of any such point of view. My own opinion is that any lingering prejudices against women as candidates is to be found equally among men and women voters. . . . The women who polled badly did so partly because they were eleventh-hour candidates, and partly because they lacked machinery and organisation. Mrs. Corbett Ashby, who stood as a Liberal candidate for the Ladywood Division of Birmingham, was given a hopeless seat to fight; and it is doubtful if an average man candidate would have polled as well. It must be remembered that the electorate

is a middle-aged electorate. The women under thirty whose efforts in the workshops of the country are supposed to have won the enfranchisement of their sex are themselves disfranchised. There is a future for women in the House of Commons; the woman's point of view must ultimately find expression there as elsewhere.

A correspondent, supporting Miss Macarthur, points out that, while most of the Unionist candidates in Birmingham were the usual political "duds," Mrs. Corbett Ashby had as her opponent a really able candidate in Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

Although only before the constituency three weeks, Mrs. Ashby polled 50 per cent. more votes than a well-known local Liberal candidate in a neighbouring constituency, and considerably more than such a strong local man as Mr. J. G. Hurst (the Recorder of Warwick) in the Sparkbrook Division. Miss Macarthur therefore is fully justified in assuming that a man candidate would not have done better. Indeed, the probability is he would not have done nearly as well.

"Hail to the Vanquished!" is the greeting of *The Gentlewoman*, which goes on to say:—"It is a serious loss to the nation that the Parliament of Reconstruction should not include a body of serious and instructed women members to contribute their special and instinctive knowledge to the sum of wisdom which must handle an economic situation in which the fate of women and children is so intimately concerned. The courageous ladies who have been defeated at the polls have performed a real service to the community in coming forward as they have done; their action will not only give them valuable experience for future use and stimulate candidatures and organisation in days to come, but it will react favourably upon the chosen legislators, who must represent both majorities and minorities, and will feel that they have the force of a compact and increasing opinion and enthusiastic ideals to consider in their decisions. The present rebuff is unfortunate, but by no means final."

### HOW NEWCASTLE WOMEN COUNTED THE VOTES.

The woman journalist on the *Newcastle Daily Journal* contributes the following interesting and vivid description of the election count in Newcastle, in which women for the first time played an important part. We publish it with acknowledgments and thanks to our contemporary:—

"For the first time women have unsealed the mysteries of the ballot paper and recorded their votes in a parliamentary election. We have been given to understand that the women's votes predominated over those of the men in the proportion of 3 to 1, a fact which contradicts any supposed apathy of the women electors.

"Perhaps, also, the various organised bodies of women workers and their organisers, Mrs. Ornsby, Mrs. Renwick, and Mrs. Doyle, may fittingly be accorded the approbation which is their need. The addressing of women's meetings from three-legged chairs and other uncertain dais was worthy of a great result. No wonder then that the counting of the votes became a matter of absorbing interest.

"The Guildhall, a picturesque setting for the final act of the poll, was chilly, and presented a rather formidable aspect. The prisoners' docks, with their sinister iron spikes, and the retinue of police were partly responsible for this. The mediæval gallery resounded with the hum of modern affairs, and the city arms kept watch. Twenty tables were ranged round the sides of the auditorium, each divided into two sections, with their attendant boxes, 'Votes for Renwick' and 'Votes for Smith.' In the centre there was what I will call the stirring box (for lack of the technical term), with its sticks, and the ballot boxes were near, sealed and red-taped in quite orthodox fashion—all new and mysterious appliances to the uninitiated.

"Presently the counters of the votes streamed in, and among them were some women. The scruti-

neers, and again there were women, having taken up their sentinel positions at the rear of the tables, the first count commenced. Seals were broken and the mystic contents of the boxes poured on to the tables, the absent voters' box not being forgotten. This count, to check the numbers of votes with the presiding officers' returns, was a somewhat lengthy proceeding. Cigars and cigarettes, among the men, solaced a part of the waiting company, the feminine part, being devoid of any means to soothe—for chocolate has not been so plentiful as smokes—waited with Griselda-like patience, commenting meanwhile on the beauty of the building and on the oozing waves of Tyne.

"Among this waiting company of women, who did not allow the chill atmosphere to cool their enthusiasm, were Mrs. and Miss Renwick, Mrs. Ornsby, Mrs. Smith (wife of the Labour candidate), and Mrs. Smith (wife of Councillor Smith, Mr. Renwick's agent). Mrs. Laverick is worthy of special comment. She is Mr. Smith's agent, and has the honour of being the first woman agent in England. [This honour, we believe, belongs to Mrs. Marion Holmes, election agent to Miss Nina Boyle at Keighley, March, 1918.—ED. VOTE.]

"The first count ended, the ballot papers were poured into the stirring-box to be duly poked about and mixed to the required consistency. Soon the baskets were filled, and once more the counters found themselves busy, and the scrutineers, too. It is much easier to stand and watch, and incidentally criticise, than to perform. The excitement grew as the count progressed. Conjectures were freely made, and lamentations over sundry bets which would have to be paid. At the table where the spoiled papers were sorted the fun gave one an insight into the happy side of an election, and created a doubt if after all election stories as presented in comic papers were not genuine.

"One paper exhibited twelve kisses for Mr. Smith. Mr. Renwick was inclined to resent this, and commented somewhat sarcastically on his bald head. Mr. Smith, by the way, has a luxuriant abundance of that which Mr. Renwick lacked. Naturally it was assumed that it was a woman's ballot paper. Another paper, evidently that of an absent voter and a soldier, invited the candidate's patience in 'Wait till I get home.' No doubt he was anxious to get on with his war, acting on the old adage, 'One thing at a time.'

"The boxes began to fill up, and soon, laden with their burdens of votes, were brought up to be totalled. 'Renwick,' 'Smith,' were chalked on the blackboard in readiness, and when 9,414 was placed opposite the former and 4,976 opposite the latter the long wait was at an end. After the declaration of the poll the candidates thanked the Returning Officer. Mr. Renwick referred to his late opponent as his friend, for the fight was now finished."

"Amid the hearty applause given to each candidate there was that undercurrent of sympathy and approbation which is innate in every Briton for a defeated opponent who has fought a clean fight."

### The Latest Pioneer.

Congratulations to Mrs. Lucas for the splendid fight she made in Kennington by taking the place, in a time of personal grief, of her husband, who passed away before polling day after having been nominated as Unionist candidate. Mrs. Lucas achieved a success which warrants good hope for a future contest, and we hope she may still become a member of Parliament. The result of the election was announced last Saturday as follows:—

KENNINGTON.—Purchase, H. G. (Coalition Liberal), 4,705; Lucas, Mrs. (Unionist), 3,573; Glennie, W. (Labour), 2,817. Coalition majority, 1,132.

## THE VOTE.

Proprietors:—THE MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., LTD.  
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FRIDAY, January 10th, 1919.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—

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To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.

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### EDITORIAL.

The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS. if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATE.

At Home and Abroad ... post free, 6/6 per annum.

## WOMEN VOTERS AND THE COALITION VICTORY.

Fifty years of effort and sacrifice went by in the struggle to obtain votes for women, and women need not be depressed if they have failed to obtain their election to Parliament after a campaign of less than fifty—or in many cases—twenty days. The extraordinary cataclysm under which two historical political parties have been submerged leaves the electorate somewhat dazed and feeling blindly after the causes of failure and success.

It was early recognised that every misfortune which might happen to individual politicians or parties would be traced to the malign influence of the woman's vote, and the enemies of the Coalition have not been slow to attribute their own failure and the success of the "coupon" policy to the agency of the new voters. The ballot does not give up its dead, and it is not possible to confirm or refute the charge, though there is no shred of evidence to show that the proportion of votes cast by women for the Coalition was greater than that cast by men. It is possible that some women voted for the Coalition because a Coalition Government under Mr. Lloyd George passed the Representation of the People Act enfranchising six or seven millions of women. The probability that any Government granting votes to women would receive a certain proportion of "gratitude" votes at the following election was pointed out many years ago, when a Liberal Government was being pressed by a large section of its own supporters to be true to the basic principles of Liberalism and enlarge the bounds of freedom. It would not be safe to regard the defeat of the older Liberalism as the women's retaliation for this denial of justice and for the "Wait and See" policy adopted towards them. The effect of this policy was probably indirect, and we gather that there is a somewhat uncomfortable feeling among Liberals that "more ought to have been made of women." Though the old Liberal party contained some of the worst enemies of women, it also contained many of their best friends, and it is with very great regret that they find the names of Sir John Simon, Sir Willoughby Dickinson, and Mr. Chancellor among the defeated candidates. Their services in the House of Commons in everything which concerned the interests of women have been untiring and invaluable for many years, and will be sorely missed. As a member of the Joint Committee of the House of Lords and House of Commons on Criminal Law legislation, Sir Willoughby was a keen questioner

and watcher on behalf of women. We shall always remember this latest service with grateful appreciation.

If one is led to the conclusion that men and women are equally responsible for putting the Coalition into power, it is because it is evident that the Coalition had the clearest case to present to the electors. Compared to the mind of the politician or even to that of the average reader of newspapers, the mind of the politically uneducated elector absorbs the obvious and only the obvious. It was the obvious line for the party who had "seen the war through" to ask the suffrages of the people that it might "see the peace through." It was obvious that it would do so at a time convenient to itself. Any party in power would have done the same. Neither of the other parties had the same clear case. The leader of the Liberal party said that he saw nothing in the programme of the Coalition of which he could disapprove, but at the same time he refused to enter the Coalition—a position which, while it could be logically defended, was difficult to interpret to the understanding of the vast bulk of the electors. The Labour party was not in a position to take the place of the Government in power. It had very recently been reorganised. Its policy was not understood, and its leaders were not well known. It had been divided on the question of the war, and it was likely to be again divided on the question of the peace. As far as programmes went, there was little to choose between the Labour programme and that of the more advanced Coalition candidates, while the fact that the Coalition Liberals were a party tied to and dominated by a larger Unionist section was not so apparent before the election as it is now. All these considerations seem to relieve women of the onus, if it is regarded as such, of having brought the Coalition into power.

We are not depressed, because we knew that votes for women was but the wicket gate at the beginning of the journey, and not the goal at the end. We are not so dull but we can learn, and, if there is one lesson above all others to be learnt from this election, it is the need for Proportional Representation. Do we realise that out of every 19 votes (representing 50 per cent. of the electorate) cast at the election, ten were given for Mr. Lloyd George and nine against him? Thus, he has not received more than 25 per cent. of the votes of the registered electors, yet Bradford, Bristol, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, and Newcastle are entirely represented by Coalition members. Ten out of the eleven members for Birmingham are followers of Mr. Lloyd George, so are fourteen out of the fifteen members for Glasgow, and eight out of the nine members for Liverpool. In the large county of Yorkshire the Coalition polled not quite 3 to 2—the membership should therefore be represented by 34 to 23. The actual figures are 49 to 8!—a majority of 41 for the Coalition instead of 11.

It is clear that Proportional Representation is the next step towards the perfecting of representative government, and that it is no longer a question of mere academic interest to women. It may be taken as almost a certainty that, if the proposals of the Speaker's Conference had been adopted, and that there had been no constituency with less than three members, some of the women candidates would have polled sufficient votes to have enabled them to represent, if not the majority of the electors in the constituency, yet a considerable minority who, under the present unfair system, are entirely unrepresented. The present system, which ignores minorities in the constituencies, however great they may be, but which may actually place a minority in power, must be ended. Such a system of misrepresentation is a danger to the State. E. M. N. C.

## WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE DINNER TO THE THREE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES.

### The Historic Occasion: Victory Sure!

The Women's Freedom League dinner, at the Central Hall, Westminster, on January 3, to the three Parliamentary candidates who are members of the League—Mrs. Despard, Miss Phipps, B.A., and Mrs. How Martyn, B.Sc.—will remain memorable as the first public recognition of the gallant fight of these plucky pioneer women. The announcement of the gathering brought an immediate application for tickets in such numbers that the seating capacity of the hall was speedily exhausted and, to our great regret, many friends were unable to gain admission. The fortunate ones who secured tickets agreed that it was a great historic occasion and memorable in our annals. In addition to the guests of honour there were distinguished visitors from the United States, India, and Russia, who expressed their great pleasure in being present, and heartily congratulated the candidates on their splendid efforts. Mr. G. K. Devadhar, M.A., of Poona, one of the Indian editors who were recently the guests of the nation, said that he was more and more impressed every day by what he saw and heard of the service of women to the nation. The story of the suffrage struggle amazes him now that he hears some of the facts which were boycotted by the Press, and he hopes very soon to see women in Parliament. Miss Mary McDowell, head of the University Settlement, Chicago, says the women of the United States reverence the British women for the way in which they have faced the great problems of the last four years and for their admirable work in every sphere; the bus conductors delight her heart, and she tells them so, much to their delight, whenever she gets into a bus. There were present members of the United States Red Cross, British women from Overseas, and others, all of whom rejoiced in the fine fight made by British women in the General Election and the stimulus it will be to women in all countries. The National Federation of Women Teachers was well represented, and the members were warmly welcomed for their splendid service in supporting Miss Phipps as the Women Teachers' representative at Chelsea. Other friends from many parts of the country attended the dinner and joined their enthusiasm to the determination of London members of the League to carry on the fight to victory.

Dr. Knight presided at the dinner and welcomed the whole company in the celebration of a great occasion. Short speeches by the candidates and other speakers were the "order of the day," preceded by the important business of taking a photograph of the gathering.

### Never Daunted, Never Dull.

MISS UNDERWOOD, who was first to be called upon to make a five-minutes' speech, said how delighted the Women's Freedom League was to give public recognition to the invaluable services rendered by the three candidates, and rejoiced that they had been able to accept the invitation to the dinner. The League felt it could not pay sufficient honour to the pioneers for their splendid work in the interests of women. We have seen men candidates at work, said Miss Underwood, but not one worked harder than the women, who were never daunted, never dull, and never missed a meeting. Their non-success reflected on the electorate, which had not the sense to put them at the head of the poll, not on the women or their work. If we had searched the country from end to end we could not have found three candidates whom we should have been more pleased to support. Women who fight and do not get in must fight again until they win.

DR. G. B. CLARK, proposing the toast of the health of the women candidates, said that it was a

pleasing duty to pay honour to the pioneer women who fought under conditions which made it impossible for them to win. As an old parliamentary hand who had fought six elections, he knew that there was not sufficient time for them to get into touch with their constituencies, nor had they adequate machinery to carry on the contest; yet they deserved success for their plucky fight in a good cause. Mrs. Despard, said Dr. Clark, had fought, as he himself had done, under the banner of Labour, and he hoped she would have an opportunity to fight again; Miss Phipps and Mrs. How Martyn, as Independents, had stood for useful and urgent reforms. The teaching profession had not the status and emoluments which it ought to enjoy, and Miss Phipps, a teacher herself, would have done good service in the House of Commons to bring about the necessary change. Two men had represented the teaching profession in the House of Commons, but they were very supine. If there had been a woman teacher as Member of Parliament she would have brought the wrongs of the profession before the House, and not have sacrificed her place to secure title and office as men have done. Dr. Clark characterised the election as not only curious, but one of the most amusing he had experienced. Women had proved that they voted for one side or the other as they chose, just as men do. Many electors did not know what they were voting for; they were asked to support a man who had won the war and must now win the peace. Mr. Lloyd George had made the most radical and socialistic speeches yet heard; a new heaven and a new earth were to be brought in, and nobody wanted to oppose his great plan of reconstruction. The Conservatives, however, lay low and said nothing. The result of the election was a Conglomerate Government, composed of men with ideals supported by reactionaries. A Cabinet of supermen, he considered, would fail; then women will have a better chance of being returned to do the work they are so well fitted to carry out in the House of Commons.

### Organise at Once.

MRS. DESPARD, on being called upon to reply to the toast, was received with most enthusiastic applause. She said that the women candidates were neither disheartened nor daunted; the course of events was a stimulus to further action. Great achievements have to be worked for, and that is exactly what the women are setting themselves to do. If the candidates had rendered splendid service they recognised the splendid help which had been given to them, not for their sakes only, but for the promise of better things to come. The reason great causes have not triumphed as they ought to have done is that there has been want of unity among those seeking the better things in national and human service. But now we are ready. In the future opening out before us we must sink small differences and stand together for a better order of society. Men and women must stand together; unless women form part of the national councils we shall not have the new young world we ought to have. The young world is now stirring within us as the unborn child stirs close to the mother's heart. Let that give us hope and enthusiasm. Organisation is what is wanted. Mrs. Despard said she was setting to work in her own neighbourhood; the small streets would be visited; many lives in those streets were very dull. The women would be pleased to see visitors to talk with them on political questions. This was found out during the election, but the work lasted only a few days. It must be spread out over months and years. Then we should have an educated electorate, with women knowing the principles for which we stood. "I should like again to express thanks more hearty than I can put into words not only for the unfailing service, but for the

constant love shown. From this delightful festival we shall all go forth stimulated; we shall work harder, and when we go down hill we shall feel that we have not lived in vain, but have done something to build up and prepare for the young world which is so dear to us."

#### A Nightmare of "Points."

"The election presents itself to me as a nightmare of 'points,'" said Miss Phipps, in replying to the toast and giving some of her experiences. "There were President Wilson's 14 points, with which I was asked to agree. The discharged soldiers and sailors had 10 points which I had to know by number. The temperance societies had 9 points, and every other society expressed itself in points. I feel as if I never wanted to see or hear a 'point' again! Not one of the old anti-suffrage cries was heard at my meetings, though I was longing for them to be asked: 'Don't you wish you were a man?' I was ready to reply 'Don't you!' 'Why don't you go home and do the washing and get the old man's supper?' But these and similar familiar questions did not come." Miss Phipps added that not being a party candidate, she had sympathy for various points in the programmes of various parties, but not full sympathy for all. Therefore on such questions as Home Rule for Ireland, religious instruction in schools, making Germany pay for the war, she lost votes by not being able to satisfy all shades of opinion. When she advocated the endowment of motherhood as making for better conditions and enabling the mother to get a little help in her work at home, and more leisure to widen her interests, she was represented as a wicked person who wanted to turn the mother out of the home and bring in another woman with the old man! It takes a long time to educate people, she said, including women. She considered that the women candidates received votes from both men and women. Women were urgently needed in the House of Commons. On such questions as the moral standard and sex legislation there was the greatest need for women at Westminster. One or two women members of Parliament would do more on these questions than the 700 odd men!

#### Contest Bye-Elections and Local Government Elections.

Mrs. How MARTYN said that, though disappointed, women were not disheartened or discouraged. A prominent Labour member supporting the Coalition had declared that no women members were wanted, for they would only support the Government when it was right. "We want members of Parliament who will always support the Government!" he added. Mrs. How Martyn said it was very difficult to get people to take a woman candidate seriously. "If I vote for you, will you see that a bath is put in my house, and that I do not have to carry water to wash eight children?" "Will you turn Lord Milner out of the Government?" "Will you reform the laws of inheritance as they affect women?" These were samples of the questions asked. A man told her he would vote for her because when men got into the House of Commons they were muzzled, but he had never yet seen a Government that was able to muzzle women! On the day of the poll a constituent declared that he should vote for the man candidate, but his wife ought to vote for the woman! Mrs. How Martyn urged that women should contest every bye-election even if they only received 100 votes. This was the only way of learning everything about elections and building up organisations. She spoke of the coming London County Council elections on March 8, and of the Urban, Rural, and District Boards on March 31. There should be hundreds of women on these councils, but it meant immediate and continuous work. Better that every woman should be defeated than that none should stand. She also strongly ad-

vocated using every means in our power to get a British woman sent as delegate to the Peace Conference. The Women's Freedom League and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies have been urging this for many months past, but they must be supported strongly and at once. Mrs. How Martyn expressed the wish that a telegram of congratulation should be sent to the one woman who was returned to Parliament. Thanks to workers were an impertinence; all of us were fellow-workers with our different rôles allotted, and we could all congratulate ourselves, she said, "on having done a fine piece of work which was well worth doing."

#### The Women's Freedom League Always "Politically, On the Spot."

The toast of the Women's Freedom League was proposed by Miss Chrystal Macmillan, who declared that the League was one of the most politically-on-the-spot bodies in the country; at the essential moment it was always there, and brought others together. As instances she mentioned the League's vigorous action when the Government attempted to reintroduce the Contagious Diseases Acts, and the gathering of the evening to congratulate the women parliamentary candidates. The recent election, she said, had furnished further evidence for the need of the woman M.P. Miss Macarthur—no one was better known throughout the country—was not allowed to stand in her own name. Miss Macmillan hoped she would raise an election petition. The Countess Markiewicz would be disqualified because she had lost her nationality on marriage. This was not under the old law of coverture by which a woman was regarded as the property of her husband, but under a modern law passed by a male House of Commons, and particularly insulting to the women of the country. At the Passport Office the men and unmarried women were asked where they were born; the married women were asked where their husbands were born. To get these things remedied women must be in Parliament. Many electors would have liked to have been in the constituencies of the three candidates who were the guests of honour. Men candidates were often unsatisfactory on essential points. One had declared that he did not know what was meant by an equal standard of morality! Another insisted that mothers had equal rights with fathers as guardians of their children—"a barrister had told him it was so!" It was necessary to organise at once and get the right candidates ready, for the next general election might not be so very far off!

MISS ALIX M. CLARK, in reply, said that the Women's Freedom League was a Grand Old League, and was specially glad to give the dinner in honour of the three warriors who had fought so gallantly. She added some amusing experiences of election work in canvassing in Battersea. One old lady visited our committee rooms and demanded a vote. She was 76, she explained, and remarked that that husband of hers had "always collared the vote till now. He was now dead, so it belonged to her." "For whom shall you vote?" she was asked. "For both, of course!" Instruction in the way to vote followed. After some days of careful practice at home she emerged triumphantly from the polling station and announced to the police official that she had put the biggest cross she could opposite to Despard. The moral of the recent experience was to start again at once to prepare for the next election: Woman's Day was yet to come!

A hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Fisher and the Minerva Café for the excellent dinner they had cooked and served was carried with enthusiasm. It was with considerable reluctance that the historic gathering broke up; its interest and stimulus was felt by all.

#### WHY?

"What! all our pretty ones," all massacred? All except Countess Markievicz. At this time we shall do well to recall Sir William Harcourt's quotation when the Liberal party was laid low in 1895, and a Conservative Government began its ten years' lease of power:

"Nor 'bate one jot or heart or hope,  
But still bear up, and steer right onward."

It is greatly to be regretted that Mrs. Despard will have no place in the new Parliament. She is perhaps the only woman who "nursed" her constituency, which she did literally and thoroughly in the best sense, in her babies' crèche and hospital, her care and club for their mothers, her soup kitchens and restaurant, which she carried on as a high duty long before the war-clouds broke, and before anyone regarded women sitting in Parliament as a feasible proposition.

Let us remember Lord Beaconsfield's great dictum: *Health is the statesman's first duty*. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain told us that when he first heard this statement he regarded it as an absurdity, but later he came to acknowledge it as a profound truth. An American writer, Mr. Price Collier, declares the earth will be as cold as the moon before men learn that the only real wealth is health; but he wrote before the war, before that million of C3 men had to be catalogued as unfit in all but age to serve the Empire in her hour of need. Health is the great *métier* of women; outside Parliament we shall strengthen the hands of those who are inside, and demand the numerous reforms, such as adequate pay for work, the minimum wage, right conditions of labour, the due inspection of food, sufficient and hygienic housing, better education, and so forth.

At least, women by their failure in the election have pleased some of their former enemies of the Press, and have shown, what is rather rare in politics, gratitude to the party that enfranchised them. Some have written letters saying that they voted for the Coalition candidate out of gratitude.

If we women are wise, I suggest that we should have a small, select, capable committee, not of women only—say, five members—to discover why we failed on December 14, and what we must do to be saved next time. We should make a penny pamphlet of the results of the inquiry, scatter it abroad with a bountiful hand, and determine now that our present position shall lead to success in the near future. This is the way that we must 'bate neither heart nor hope.

The Women's Freedom League, in its excellent Wednesday meetings, carries out admirably the duty of speaking to the converted, and inspiring them to further effort, but we must also get out into the highways and byways of ignorance and indifference, crowded with men and women who care little for public ends, who want to take as much out of society as they can, and who are incapable of thought, let alone self-denial for the common weal.

Mr. Lovat Fraser, writing in the *Daily Mail*, says the defeat of the women at the polls shows that their enfranchisement was not necessary. This strikes us as very cheap criticism, the kind of thing that will go down in a third-rate music-hall. The working classes were enfranchised in 1868 and 1884. For many years, in the nineties, there were only about a dozen Labour members in Parliament, maintained there by their trade unions, and not coherent; after the elections of 1906 and 1910 they increased to 40; to-day they number 79. But everyone knows that Labour is more than "inching along," and capital is eyeing the situation with very wide open eyes. It is an axiom in war that Britain can never win the first battle. Let Mr. Lovat Fraser cast his eyes

over the operations of this newly ended war. To this day the man in the street hardly knows whether Falkland and Jutland were British victories or defeats. But Germany knew when the Day of Humiliation occurred at Rosyth, Scapa Flow, and Harwich last November. There is such a thing as having the laugh at the last. *Qui vivra terra; we mean to laugh.*

Note, too, what occurred in Finland. After women were enfranchised 19 were immediately elected to the Landtag; 1908, 24; 1909, 22; 1910, 15; 1911, 19. The women did admirable work in factory regulation, the restriction of alcohol, the development of women's trade unions, in education, and even in the Admiralty. Mme. Aili Pesonen made her high organizing capacity felt. With the men the women had resisted Russian aggression and helped to organize and carry out the Great Strike the strike of a whole people in 1905 against its oppressors. Finland showed a rapid, easy, and complete victory for women's share in Government. But Finland's excellent democratic lead to Europe in popular government was severely handicapped by Russian autocracy, and to-day it is difficult to be sure of what is happening. But hope is strong in a new resurrection. Our fate will be different. We shall resemble that youthful scion of the British aristocracy who thought that he would like to represent a constituency. Young Lord C— was 25, but had the appearance of 18. When he rose to speak at a meeting an outspoken man at the back of the hall shouted, "Does your mother know you're out?" "Perhaps not," replied his lordship, "but to-morrow she will know I am in." To-morrow Britannia will know that some of the women are in. hustings. C. S. BREMNER.

#### REGISTRATION GUIDE.

The new register of Parliamentary and Local Government voters is now being made up. The qualifying period of residence is the six months ending January 15, 1919.

Borough authorities are employing official canvassers to enquire at every house and gain exact information about qualified electors in order to make the new register complete. This canvass is not being carried out everywhere, so we urge women not to wait for the official visitor, who may not come or may make a mistake. If you are not on the last register get a form at once from your Town Hall, fill it up, and return it to the Town Clerk. Do not wait until February 1, when the register is to be published, and you will have to send in a claim if your name is missing.

In any difficulty write to us, addressing your letter to the Registration Guide, Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

#### Women's Wages: Demand for Equal Pay.

Miss Dorothy Evans addressed the North London Branch of the National Secular Society on Sunday evening, January 5, on "Equal Pay for Sweated Housewives." Keen interest was aroused, and as a result the following resolution was sent to the Ministries of Reconstruction, of Labour, and of Munitions:—

That this meeting deplores the fact that the conditions on which Government unemployment donations are granted are such as to encourage, if not to force, women to accept low-paid employment, and that the anticipated decision of the Committee on Women in Industry in favour of an equal standard for men and women has been so delayed during this transition period. We urge the Government to set an example to the nation by immediately raising the wages of women in Government Departments to the level of men with similar duties.

FRIDAY,  
JAN. 10,  
1919.

# THE VOTE

ONE  
PENNY  
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

### Annual Conference.

At its meeting last Saturday the National Executive decided that our annual conference should take place in London on Saturday, April 5. Further particulars of place and time will be given later. We are urging our branches to call their members together in order to frame resolutions for the conference agenda, to nominate candidates for the National Executive Committee who will be responsible during the coming year for carrying out the policy of the Women's Freedom League decided upon at this conference, and to appoint their delegates to speak and vote for the resolutions or amendments supported by the branch. All members of the League have the right to attend the annual Conference, but only branch delegates and the present members of the National Executive Committee are allowed to take part in the discussions, and delegates alone can vote.

### Women at the Peace Conference.

The Committee agreed unanimously to a resolution urging upon Mr. Lloyd George the great importance of women being present as delegates at the Peace Conference. It was pointed out that women had a vital interest in the settlement of a permanent peace, and that they were also specially concerned in the question of the right of women to their own nationality, and in the arrangements for the immediate return to their homes of the women deported from Allied countries.

### Resolutions of Thanks to Defeated Friends.

The Committee agreed unanimously to resolutions of cordial thanks for their unfailing support of women's interests in the House of Commons being sent to Sir Willoughby Dickinson, Sir John Simon, Mr. Lees Smith, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Whitehouse, and Mr. Joseph King. The Committee could not but regret that these champions of women's equality with men would not at present find a place in the next House of Commons, and expressed the hope

that it would not be long before they were again returned to continue their work in this direction.

### London Meetings.

Readers will be interested to know that our weekly afternoon meetings begin on Wednesday, January 15th, at 3 o'clock, when our old friend, Miss Beatrice Kent, will speak on "The Organised Bodies of Trained Nurses and Their Long Struggle for Freedom"; and that on Saturday afternoon, January 18th, we shall have a political meeting, all the speeches of which will be limited to five minutes' length, and the subject dealt with being "OUR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE KING'S SPEECH." A discussion will follow, and on the evening of Tuesday, February 4th, the day on which Parliament opens, we shall have another meeting, at which we shall express our opinion of the actual King's Speech. On Thursday, February 13th, a conference will be held on "The Endowment of Motherhood." The Committee hopes that London members will make these meetings widely known—all of them being held in the Minerva Café, unless otherwise stated.

F. A. U.

## Women's Freedom League Settlement, 93, Nine Elms-lane, London, S.W. 8.

Now that the end of the war is releasing so many volunteers from the canteens, V.A.D. hospitals, etc., we are hoping to see some of these at the Settlement asking for work! There is the old, but none the less urgent, need of servers for the children's dinners from 11.30 to 1.0 daily; there are the guest children to be taken for walks, mended for, played with and put to bed. There are Milk Depot cases to be visited and reported on. The Boy Scouts are still awaiting a scoutmaster or mistress, and for anyone with initiative and willing to do something for the entertainment or instruction of an eager, affectionate, and intelligent set of children, there is always our large dining-room vacant in the evenings. A Play Club, for instance, would be a boon to children (and mothers), and there is now no longer the danger from air-raids which prevented one being started last winter. Gifts are good, and we acknowledge all we have had this Christmas most gratefully, but the pressing need in the New Year is personal service; even an hour occasionally would be a help. We are also still looking out for another resident, paid or unpaid.

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