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WOMEN POLICE.

A Meeting will be held in a Committee Room of the House of Commons, taken in the name of Miss PICTON-TURBERVILL, M.P.,

On Wednesday, March 11th, 1931,

at 6 p.m., in order to state the case for securing an efficient body of Women Police throughout the country.

We very much hope that you will be present at this Meeting.

CHAS. G. AMMON.

ERNEST BROWN.

MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE.

GWENDOLEN IVEAGH.

LEIF JONES.

EDITH PICTON-TURBERVILL.

H. SNELL.

JOHN I. WITHERS.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

3rd March, 1931.

Pamphlet

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WOMEN POLICE.

The Work to be Done.

Many duties connected with women and children, such as those enumerated in the enclosed copy of the *Glasgow Duties*, require policewomen for their proper performance.

Special attention may be drawn to five classes of duties on which the N.C.W. consider it essential for policewomen to be employed :

- (1). Taking statements from women and children, whether victims or witnesses, in all cases connected with sexual offences.
- (2). Escort or conveyance of women prisoners and women and children to Homes, Hospitals, etc.
- (3). Searching and attending female prisoners detained at Police Stations.
- (4). Watching female prisoners, suicides, etc., in hospitals.
- (5). A systematic patrol by uniformed policewomen of parks and open spaces frequented by children and young people.

The Policewomen to do the Work.

The present number of policewomen in England and Scotland—Wales has *no* policewomen—are entirely inadequate for the performance of the above duties ; this is shown by the following figures taken from H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary's Reports, February 2nd, 1931 :—

In England and Wales, and Scotland, there are 64,693 policemen
and only 167 policewomen.

In England there are 105 policewomen in the Provinces.
45 " " " Metropolis.

In Scotland five forces employ a total of 17 policewomen.

Vacancies in the Provincial Police Forces of England and Wales on September 29th, 1930, were 2.24%.

The proportion of policewomen to policemen in all forces is one policewoman to 387 policemen.

Among 121 Borough police forces in England and Wales 33 employ policewomen ; the remaining 88 employ no policewomen. There are 60 County forces in England and Wales ; six of these employ policewomen, leaving 54 Counties with no policewomen.

Hardships result from the fact that no universally recognised methods of selection, qualifications, or training have been adopted for policewomen. Their conditions of service vary greatly in different forces ; some are not sworn in, and the provisions of the Police Pensions Act, 1921, are not universally applied.

In the case of policemen all these points are covered by **Statutory Regulations** made under Section 4, Police Act, 1919, and H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary report to the Home Secretary—in order that he may issue certificates of efficiency—that the Police Service is fully and properly administered. In his Annual Report for 1919 Sir Leonard Dunning writes :—

“ It may be useful to consider the circumstances in which *the employment of women may have to be insisted on* in satisfaction of that condition.”

In her evidence before the Bridgeman Committee in 1924, Miss Peto (Staff Officer for Women Police in Scotland Yard) said :—

Inspection—“ Whatever regulations are promulgated for police-women it is unlikely that they will be universally and thoroughly enforced without the assistance of a woman Inspector of Constabulary appointed by the Home Office.”

The Public Demand for Policewomen and the Home Office reply.

In September, 1914, the N.C.W. organised the Voluntary Women Patrols, and as a result of their experience of work undertaken for women, girls, and children, both in public places and in Police Courts, arose *the demand for the appointment of official policewomen*. Two difficulties had to be surmounted—(1) finance ; (2) legality. (1) Under D.O.R.A. (1916) the pay of whole-time policewomen became chargeable to the Police Fund ; (2) the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, established the legality of women being appointed as police constables.

As the result of a deputation received by Sir John Baird, August 8th, 1919, the Departmental Committee on the Employment of Women in Police Duties was set up in 1920 to inquire :—

“ As to the nature and limits of the assistance which can be given by women in the carrying out of police duties and as to what ought to be the status, pay, and conditions of service of women employed on such duties.”

This Report, which contains recommendations on *all that is needed to establish policewomen fully and efficiently*, was rendered largely inoperative by a covering letter from the Home Office (September, 1920) advising police authorities in England and Wales (1) that policewomen *should not be attested* ; (2) that standardisation of pay on the Report basis *should be deferred*.

The Police Pensions Act, 1921, Section 26, makes provision for “ members of a police force who are women.”

In 1922, the Geddes' Axe proposed the total abolition of all women police, but owing to agitation in both Houses of Parliament a nucleus of 20 was retained in London, and many provincial forces also retained their policewomen.

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The Bridgeman Committee (1924) appointed to review the experience gained and to make recommendations on the *future organisation and duties* of policewomen, reported that "the efficiency of the police service has been improved by their employment"; the Home Office issued a strong circular (November 21st, 1924) commending the Report. This Circular received no attention from the Police Authorities.

Departmental Committees of Enquiry in England and Scotland on Sexual Offences against Young Persons (1925, 1926) and on the Treatment of Juvenile Offenders (1927, 1928) recommended the employment of policewomen for many duties connected with the protection of children.

In 1929 the Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure endorsed the view of the Street Offences Committee (1928) that "in dealing with cases of solicitation there is a *special sphere of usefulness for women police*"; the Royal Commission also made a series of specific recommendations on the duties of women police regarding: statements in sexual cases; statements generally; duties in uniform; duties in plain clothes; and recommended "a substantial increase in their numbers," and urged the Home Secretary to draw the attention of Chief Constables and Police Authorities to the "marked success" of the employment of women police and the good results they are convinced would follow from an increase in their present numbers.

The evidence of the National Council of Women on women police given before these Committees and the Royal Commission is largely responsible for many of the recommendations, and it is a matter of serious concern to all who have worked at this subject for so many years that *no action to carry out the recommendations with regard to the appointment of policewomen* has been taken by the Home Office.

Seeing that neither deputations nor Committees of Enquiry provoke any response from the Home Office, their reply being that *the appointment of policewomen must be left to "local discretion"*—outstanding examples of the futility of this course are furnished by Sheffield and Liverpool in which cities *the Town Council approved the appointment of policewomen*, but the *Watch Committee refused to appoint*, and the Home Office upheld its action—the National Council of Women have inevitably been led to the conclusion that nothing short of the issue of *Statutory Regulations for Policewomen* can resolve the present deadlock and secure an efficient body of women police throughout the country.