

THE VOTE,
JAN. 27, 1922
ONE PENNY.

IRISHWOMEN AND THE FRANCHISE.

THE VOTE

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FRIDAY, JAN. 27, 1922.

OBJECT : 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 in 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.

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WOMAN'S PLACE IN INSURANCE.

By M. E. WRIGHT (Superintendent of the Woman Staff, Liverpool and London, and Globe Insurance Co., Ltd.)

Women employees of Insurance Offices are divided into two sections—one, a numerous body, comprises the typists, and shorthand-writers and typists, and the other—a smaller body—the women clerks.

As regards shorthand-typists in the offices, these officials are almost entirely women. The work is suited to them, and it is work they can do well, but there is a danger of its becoming stereotyped, for technical excellence once being obtained, a shorthand-typist is apt to be confined by the nature of things to work very similar, year in, year out, and this does not allow many opportunities for that business development which employees in other departments may take advantage of in order to advance steadily to higher posts.

Further, although a shorthand-typist may be attached to the same department for a number of years, there are generally several other typists also employed, and in practice it is rare for one shorthand writer to be acquainted with the whole range of any matter.

Except in the case of the comparatively limited number of private secretarial posts to chiefs, head typists, supervisors, and so on, it is not practicable for shorthand-typists' conditions to be largely altered, and therefore their development must be from within.

There will always be room in Insurance Offices for large numbers of women typists and shorthand-writers, not only for the correspondence, but for policy-writing and general copying work. All this work is important. It is an indispensable part of the office organisation, and it is essential that as high a proportion as possible of the staff should be experts.

Most women clerks first entered Insurance offices during the war. At present their work largely lies among the more elementary routine duties owing to their lack of training in the technical principles of Insurance. To remedy this it is essential that the present holders of posts should immediately apply themselves to the study of the elements of Insurance under

guidance, either by attending classes or by correspondence courses, or by private teachers, so as, if possible, to have nothing to unlearn.

There are several directions, information in respect of which should be a matter of course, which are apt to be neglected, especially by the novice, though once acquired the knowledge cannot fail to produce a real live interest in one's own company.

Take, for instance, the question of personnel. To become acquainted with the names of the chief officials of one's company at home and abroad soon causes interest in their business record, for one cannot read the Insurance Press without seeing reports of the activities of the outstanding men in Insurance, and a feeling of pride and emulation is not far behind the first awakening of interest, to say nothing of the mental advance achieved when names cease to be names and become personalities.

Then a person really interested in their own office will make a point of studying with great attention the various prospectuses of their Company, and assimilating as much as possible of their contents. By noting carefully the inducements offered to the public, and observing the good points, and the less good points (if any), the student will gain in time the valuable ability of the critic when regarding other Companies' productions, and eventually, perhaps, even gain the knowledge enabling her to suggest to her superior officer alterations or improvements of real value in their own literature, and most certainly will add to her own powers of gaining business should her ambition lie in the direction of outside work, and she be given a chance to show what she can do. Though classes of business are standardized to a great extent nowadays, variations and improvements in Insurance Policies are constantly being made.

Then, again, the ability to read one's own Company's Balance Sheet with understanding is a great asset, and

the relationship of that final document to the various classes of Insurance work undertaken by the various departments and officials has a special interest, for it is the mirror of their ability and of that of the Management, and may at times afford a good example for the exercise (in private, of course!) of the newly-acquired critical faculty.

The foregoing will lead to the study of other Companies' productions, and, in order not to be confused with too much at the outset, comparison could be limited at first to a few of the Companies whose income and general resources most nearly approach those of one's own Company.

Regular study in all these directions will provide the aspirant with an amount of knowledge which will always be useful, and in many unexpected ways, to say nothing of the enhanced interest in the daily happenings of the office, and even in routine work, that increased intelligence in general affairs carries with it.

It is also important that the chief Insurance papers should be diligently and carefully read.

Among the chief Insurance Journals are: *The Insurance and Financial Gazette*, *The Policy*, *The Policy-Holder*, *The Post Magazine*, and *The Review*. If possible, all should be read, for each paper has its own peculiar and attractive features. No doubt, however, there are cases where the aspirant cannot afford either the time or the money to take in more than one paper. The weekly reading should be supplemented by study of the annual publication called *The Post Magazine Almanack*. The latter is a mine of indispensable information, and should be studied closely; in fact the aspirant could not do better than regard it as a text book.

Nearly all women clerks work inside the office. Only a few women have been able to undertake outside work, and those who are pioneers are usually engaged in working for Life Insurance. This is partly owing to the absence of candidates with the proper qualifications, partly because of the absence of precedent, and partly because of the fact that the knocking at the door of the Companies by women who seek this kind of work has not yet been very loud.

The procedure of Insurance Companies in the past, on the technical side, has been to take boys fresh from school as juniors, and gradually to teach them the business. Until the present time even the very suggestion of making any departure from this custom has hardly arisen for consideration.

But, as the distinguished banker, Sir Felix Schuster, said, shortly after the outbreak of War, "The world will never be the same place again." To-day we see how true this saying is. The problem of the wherewithal to live having become the preoccupation of a people, not of a sex, hundreds of thousands of new women workers now earn their living. They control their own expenditure, and large sums are paid by them for commodities into the coffers of all kinds of businesses, including Insurance. This revenue will increase year by year as the numbers of women in employment increase, for whether we like it or not, this tide of women's work is one that cannot be stayed. It is not unreasonable then to expect that the Insurance business, which appeals to women for premiums, shall give women the opportunity of becoming workers in the business.

Insurance Companies are conservative by tradition, but in this new world where women are taking such a large interest and becoming actively engaged in almost every phase of our national life, it is absolutely necessary to put tradition and precedent aside, notwithstanding the strong prejudice that may exist in many minds against a change which appears to them so vital and fundamental. Apart from the unquestionable fact that women are entitled by natural laws to be represented in every sphere of the national life to which they contribute their quota, it must not be forgotten that in seeking a career women have no alternative owing to the peculiar conditions of modern life, and consequently they feel justly entitled to claim the right of an unfettered choice (subject to their capacity) in deciding upon the occupation by which they shall earn their daily bread.

WOMEN'S MUNICIPAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A recent number of *Woman's Outlook* (South Africa) reports the election of Mrs. Greenlees on the Town Council of Pretoria. Mrs. Councillor Greenlees is the Transvaal Vice-President of the Women's Emancipation Association Union, and President of the Women's Reform Club of Pretoria, which is affiliated to the W.E.A.U. Mrs. Greenlees, who was returned by a majority of 213, was the official candidate of the Women's Reform Club, who worked hard to ensure her success. The women of Pretoria are triumphant over the return of their candidate, and have celebrated this important event in the civic history of the Northern Capital by several "At Homes." Another municipal success, reported by *Woman's Outlook*, is the election of Mrs. M. C. Wilson as Mayor of Germiston. Mrs. Wilson is the first woman to be elected Mayor of a Municipality in the Union. During the past year another woman, Mrs. Fitzgerald, acted as Deputy-Mayor of Johannesburg. Women have done magnificent work on Town Council in various parts of South Africa. Many reforms in education, child welfare, sanitary laws, liquor traffic, etc., have been initiated and carried through by women ever since the pioneer of municipal work in South Africa, Mrs. Theodore Words, broke the bonds of conservatism, and entered the Town Council of Maritzburg some years before the war.

WOMEN MEMBERS OF SOCIETY OF YORKSHIREMEN.

With only one dissident, the Society of Yorkshiremen in London decided last night to admit women members. Mr. G. F. V. Cutting, who proposed the resolution, said that some of the county associations that were flourishing had already admitted women to membership. Yorkshiremen were behind in this matter. Mr. C. D. Wright said he failed to find a single excuse or argument against the proposal. They would get on very badly at all functions of the Society if women were not admitted. Mr. Louis Ambler, who presided, said they would not be creating a precedent, but would be simply following the example of some other kindred societies that had elected women as members. It would not be necessary to change the name of the Yorkshire Society.

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WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

More Women Candidates for L.C.C.

Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan has been added to the list of prospective Municipal Reform Candidates at the L.C.C. Elections in March, and has been selected for Camberwell. She has a fine record of War work, first as Chief Controller of the Q.M.A.A.C. in France, and later as Commandant of the W.R.A.F. She is now Professor of Botany in the University of London, and head of the Botany Department, Birkbeck College. Miss Lilian Dawson (Lib.) has been adopted for the Westminster (Abbey) Division.

Women and the House of Laity.

Four candidates are standing for the vacancy in the House of Laity, created by the retirement of Mr. Douglas Eyre. Two are women, one, Miss Gilchrist, who was of great assistance in the passage of the Enabling Bill, both to Earl Grey in the Lords, and Viscount Wolmer in the Commons, and who is churchwarden of St. George's, Bloomsbury, and Miss Picton Turbervill, well-known for her pioneer work on behalf of Women's Ministrations in the Church.

Policewoman Stands for Parliament.

Commandant Allen, of the Women's Auxiliary Service, is to contest St. George's, Westminster, in the Liberal interest at the next election. She has received promises of practical co-operation from both Coalition Liberals and Independent Liberals. Miss Allen has worked in the Westminster Division since the War.

Women and Town Councils.

In by-elections for Town Councils women have been returned at Birmingham, Glasgow and Leeds. Leeds has now three women serving on the City Council. Thirty-five women are now serving on Town Councils, but so far no woman has been elected to a County Council.

Hair-Splitting in Hungary.

An electoral reform Bill in Hungary gives the right of franchise to every citizen of 25 who can read and write and who has been domiciled for a certain period in the district. Only reputable citizens over 30 are eligible for election as deputies. The franchise will only be granted to women over 24, provided they exercise an independent profession, hold a high school diploma, are mothers of three children, or if their husbands are Government officials.

Woman Councillor and the Edinburgh Guildry.

Councillor Mrs. Millar some time ago applied for admission as a Burgess and Guild Brother at Edinburgh, and the legal position as to the admission of women to the Guildry has in the interval been the subject of inquiry. Last week a sub-Committee of the Lord Provost's Committee recommended, as there were no legal difficulties in the way, the admission of Mrs. Millar.

Moslem Ladies Reprimanded.

Moslem ladies who have been disregarding tradition "by meeting male foreigners, unveiled, at receptions, and sitting with them at afternoon tea, and even dancing with them at private houses," have been reprimanded by Mustapha Fehmy, the Commissioner for the Skeriat (the Sacred Law), who assures them that chastisement awaits them in this world as well as in the next.

Airwomen Killed.

Miss Elsa Andersson, the only certificated airwoman in Sweden, was killed at Askersund this week in making a parachute descent from an aeroplane from which she jumped at a height of over 2,000 feet. The tragedy, which was witnessed by a crowd of 4,000 people, was due to the failure of the parachute to act.

Ramsgate's Freewoman.

The honour of becoming the first freeman of Ramsgate was last week conferred by the Council on Dame Janet Stancomb Wills, a generous supporter of the local charities, and who provided the town with a motor fire engine.

Women Teachers' Deputation.

The Minister of Education, Mr. Fisher, received, last Thursday, a deputation of nine representatives of the National Union of Women Teachers, who urged that there should be no reduction of expenditure on education. Miss Bale (Cardiff), President of the Union, introduced the deputation, and the speakers were Miss Phipps (Swansea) and Miss Agnes Dawson. Mr. Fisher informed the deputation that his reply must be regarded for the moment as strictly confidential.

A Second Grace Darling Honoured.

Miss Armstrong, of Cresswell, known as the second Grace Darling, has been presented by Sir Godfrey Baring, on behalf of the National Lifeboat Institution, with a gold brooch in acknowledgment of her fifty years' service to the local lifeboat.

Brighton's Women Police.

By a unanimous vote a large Brighton meeting emphatically declared in favour of the re-appointment of women police in the borough. Twenty-three women's organisations were represented at this meeting.

ENTERPRISING WOMAN PUBLISHER.

A recent enterprise is that of the Chelsea Publishing Co., with its woman director, Miss Edith Place. Miss Place is a well-known suffragist, and has had many years' experience in local government work and in social reform. For some years she acted as Secretary of the Municipal Women's Party. A great-granddaughter of Francis Place, the Chartist, she has inherited a deep interest in the welfare of the masses, and MSS. by working men or women receive special attention in her publishing business. Her ear is always open to those who have a genuine message for their generation.

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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.

IRISHWOMEN AND THE FRANCHISE.

Irishwomen are no more pleased than British women to continue to hold the parliamentary franchise on unequal terms with men, and we rejoice to see that our Irish women friends do not intend to remain inactive in this matter. They are pressing all the more for the removal of this inequality in view of the possibility in the near future of a referendum or any appeal to the country being made in connection with the Peace Treaty. The following letter signed by Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington (Chairman), and by Mrs. Connery and Mrs. Cahala (Honorary Secretaries), has been sent to Mr. Arthur Griffith, Head of the Free State, and to Mr. De Valera, Head of the Republican Party:—

"The Irish Women's Franchise League desires to wait upon you in order to draw your attention to certain grave anomalies in the present franchise law as it affects women. It also wishes to urge upon you the advisability of having the law amended by the Dail, in order that all adult women be given the franchise on the same basis as that on which men now hold it, thus securing democratic suffrage truly representative of the will of the people."

"We propose sending joint deputations from various women's societies to you on this matter, and would be obliged if you would kindly fix as early a date as possible to receive us."

We wholeheartedly wish the Irish Women's Franchise League complete success in their effort to secure for women in the South of Ireland equal enfranchisement with men, and it will give every member of the Women's Freedom League genuine pleasure to learn that Mrs. Despard is working in this campaign. If the women in the South of Ireland secure equal enfranchisement with men we may be quite sure that the women of Ulster will not delay in pressing their claims for an equal political status. Last week the Women's Freedom League wrote to the Prime Minister urging him to include in the King's Speech at the beginning of next session early in February a measure for the enfranchisement of women at the same age and on equal terms with men, and to arrange that it should be carried through all its stages into law early next Session. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship has asked Mr. Lloyd George to receive a joint deputation of women's societies (on which deputation the Women's Freedom League will be represented) to put before him the arguments for this necessary reform. Two hundred members in the House of Commons are reported to be in favour of it. We cannot think that the Dail or our own Government will think it expedient to delay for long this measure of justice for women, and we look forward with every hope to the early enfranchisement of the women of Ireland and Great Britain at the same age and on equal terms with men. In America men and women both have the vote at the age of twenty one. Surely it is time that the women of these Islands were placed upon an equal political footing with their American sisters.

WOMEN UNDERCUT MEN.

Women are not blacklegs from choice; and they do not take less money than men for work because they despise money. The plain fact is that women have to live; and as men have still practically the monopoly of the better-paid posts, and employers continue to pay men at a higher rate than women for similar work, women are forced to sell their labour almost for anything it will fetch. Men trade unionists have frequently been short-sighted in their refusal to allow women to become members of their unions, and in the lack of support given to women's efforts to secure equal pay for equal work with men. Time after time women suffragists pointed out to these trade unionists that the unequal payment regularly meted out to women would tend to cheapen all labour. How often has the Women's Freedom League urged during the Conferences of the National Union of Teachers the necessity, from the point of view of both men and women teachers, that their rates of pay should be equal? We at any rate are not surprised to learn that at a meeting of the Oxfordshire Education Committee Mr. G. P. Randolph (the Chairman), announced that the reductions in expenditure had been effected by the substitution of women teachers for men. What do men teachers say to that? If they had loyally stood by the women in their just demand for equal treatment with men there could not be this unfair competition between the sexes. From the evidence given before Lord Cave's Committee on Trade Boards, we learn that a woman shop assistant of 23, not living in, was in receipt of 24s. wages per week, and a woman of 22, living in, received 10s. per week. It was a practice with one firm to pay no wages to women assistants. Is it surprising, therefore, that a man of 27, who was a manager, was paid 34s. weekly, and an assistant manager of 23, 25s. weekly? Only when men and women together demand equal pay for equal work will women workers cease to be sweated, and men workers cease to be undercut by women.

WOMEN AS CENSORS.

We have on several occasions urged that women should share equally with men in the censorship of film productions, and have suggested either that a man and a woman should be appointed chief censors by the Government, or that men and women in equal numbers should be appointed by all local authorities for this work, our contention being that, as the Movies are visited by children of all ages in their hundreds of thousands, there ought to be some competent authority, including women, who should make it their business to see that the productions seen by these children are not likely to have any harmful effect upon them mentally or morally. In America women have also pressed for the appointment of women to the film censorship. Now we learn that in Edmonton, Alberta, two women, Mrs. Neville Harbottle and Mrs. James Craig, have been appointed to act with chief censor Howard Douglas on the Alberta Moving Picture Board. Both women are reported to be eminently fitted for the responsibility which devolves upon them. Formerly this Board consisted of two men and one woman. Mr. Herbert Greenfield, who was responsible for the change, in conversation with a representative of "The Christian Science Monitor," expressed the opinion that women were best qualified to judge as to the pictures suitable for exhibition in the Province, and as to the influence of different types of pictures on the youth of the Province. In our view the arrangement in Alberta is much preferable to the one sanctioned by the London County Council, under which one woman is appointed to work with several men members of the trade in regard to the censorship of films.

WOMEN AND LOCAL POLITICS.

Public Meeting at Caxton Hall.

An interesting Meeting, convened by the Women's Local Government Society, was held on Wednesday, January 18th, at Caxton Hall, Westminster, to promote the return of women to the London County Council, the elections for which will be held on March 2nd. Miss Bertha Mason (Chairman of the W.L.G.S. Council) presided.

Miss Adler, L.C.C., J.P., made a stirring appeal against undue economy in education. America and Germany were pressing forward with education, but in this country, she said, reactionaries were trying to cut down all possible expenditure. Technical education was practically stagnant to-day, whilst grants to universities were being reduced by £300,000. The L.C.C. controlled a thousand elementary schools, and an average of 65,000 children; 250,000 of these were still being taught in classes of fifty and over. "Hands off education" must be put in the forefront of women's programmes in municipal politics. With regard to Housing, said Miss Adler, conditions in London were far too grave to allow of building being curtailed; over 184,000 people were living under appallingly insanitary conditions, and at least twenty-two areas had been notified by the Medical Officer of Health as unfit for human habitation. Some of these areas had been made the subject of enquiries by the Minister of Health. Southwark had already been dealt with, and Whitechapel was to receive attention in the future. Work on the L.C.C., concluded Miss Adler, also offered great scope in the care of mental deficient, and especially in connection with mental hospitals; in public health schemes, such as the tuberculosis campaign; in the proper control of cinemas and other entertainments; inspection of massage establishments, employment agencies, parks and theatres. At present there were

only ten women amongst a total of 144 members of the London County Council.

Miss Margaret McWilliam, C.B.E., L.C.C., J.P., urged with much eloquence the need for more Nursery Schools. There was a great gap, she said, between a child's infancy and its school life, and it was for this reason that Nursery Schools had come into existence. The McMillian Nursery School, with its 250 children, was the largest in the world. The Education Authorities had recently given a grant of £1,000 for its extension, and an additional £1,000 for equipment. In addition, thirty-five students of Nursery School methods had been sent out all over the country to start new centres. One had recently been established in Boston, America.

Dr. Adeline Roberts (Marylebone), one of the L.C.C. candidates at the forthcoming L.C.C. election, compared the medical work of the London County Council to a tap which helped to shut off much disease and suffering by its methods of prevention. Housing conditions, she affirmed, were at the bedrock of the problem of disease. As a co-opted member of the Asylums Committee, she said that a little experience in this direction showed a great need for the reform of the present lunacy laws. At present young women, suffering from puerperal fever, sometimes after the birth of their first child, were certified as lunatics, and placed in company with confirmed mental cases. The Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 was really a wonderful Act, about which people knew very little. This Act gave large powers concerning imbeciles, etc., and children in Mentally Deficient Schools.

Other women candidates who addressed the meeting included Mrs. Dunn Gardiner, Miss Lilian Dawson (Westminster), Miss Rosamond Smith (Islington), and Dr. Barry Lambert.

FAMILY ENDOWMENT.

Monday Evening Debate at Minerva Cafe.

An interesting Debate was held last Monday evening, in the Minerva Cafe, between Mrs. E. M. Hubback and Miss Helena Normanton, B.A. Mrs. Dexter, presided.

Mrs. Hubback spoke to the following resolution: "That the present system of providing for families from individual wages is unsatisfactory in its social results, and wasteful of national resources." The children of the nation, she said, should be regarded as a national asset, and their welfare treated not as a private but as a public concern. The present basis for wages was fixed on the assumption that a man had to support a wife and three children. This meant that in families where there were more than three children the subsistence was not sufficient, and in families where there were less than three children, or the man was unmarried, the wages were too much in comparison. During the War, when separation allowances included payments for each child, the condition of the children became immensely improved. It was argued that the cost of family endowment would be very great, but the present system of wage allowances was still more extravagant. It was estimated that there were 10½ million adult male wage earners in this country. As each of these were supposed to be responsible for three children, the wages now being paid were sufficient for 30 million children. Yet there were only 10½ million children in the country.

Two important schemes were being discussed as remedies. The first proposed that the maintenance of children should be the care of the State, leaving the man free to support himself and his wife. In such National Family Endowment the necessary sum would be raised from taxation, and the allowances paid out weekly to each mother. The second scheme, which was already working in several parts of the world, proposed that employers should pay to each employee,

whether married or single, a wage sufficient to keep himself and his wife. In addition employers would pay into a State Fund an estimated allowance for one child for every employee, whether married or single. This method would do away with any motive to differentiate between married and unmarried employees.

Miss Helena Normanton, in opposing the resolution, agreed that the present system of paying wages was bad, but said the proposed alternatives were worse. The cost of such schemes would be enormous, and the country, at the present moment, could not possibly sustain any further taxation. During the Napoleonic era the working classes had been in receipt of a bonus on each child, and both the birthrate and the National Debt became enormously increased in consequence. Moreover, such schemes could not be run except by a Ministry of Child Welfare, which would again cost a great deal. Their working out would also bring with them a great many unpleasant consequences, especially for women. Married women in industry would be sent back to the home because of the extra money given to their children. Employers would use the fact of children's allowances as a pretext for reducing wages. The birthrate would increase alarmingly, especially amongst the unfit, and eugenists would be active in the promotion of measures of sterilization. There would also be a great increase in inspectors and other state officials in family life, to see if the extra money was being properly spent. The effect upon fatherhood and motherhood would be disastrous, for all incentive to individual sacrifice would be taken from parents.

Many questions, and an animated discussion, followed from the audience, and at the conclusion of the meeting the resolution was voted upon. The voting, which resulted in the loss of the resolution, was very close.

FRIDAY,
JANUARY 27,
1922.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

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