

THE VOTE,
OCTOBER 20, 1916.
ONE PENNY.

"An Unanswerable Case."

C. DESPARD.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XIV. No. 365.

(Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper and transmissible through the post in the United Kingdom at the newspaper rate of postage, but to Canada and Newfoundland at the Magazine rate.)

FRIDAY, OCT. 20, 1916.

Edited by C. DESPARD.

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WHERE WOMEN VOTE.

Canada

	Municipal.	Parliamentary.		Municipal.	Parliamentary.
NEW ZEALAND	1886	1893	MANITOBA	1888	1996
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	1880	1894	BRITISH COLUMBIA	1888	—
WEST AUSTRALIA	1871	1899	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	1888	—
NEW SOUTH WALES	1867	1902	QUEBEC	1892	—
TASMANIA	1884	1903	ALBERTA	—	1916
QUEENSLAND	1886	1905	SASKATCHEWAN	—	1916
VICTORIA	1869	1908	BURMAH	1884	—
ENGLAND AND WALES	1869	—	FINLAND	1883	1906
ISLE OF MAN	—	1881	NORWAY	1901	1907
SCOTLAND	1881	—	DENMARK	1908	1915
IRELAND	1898	—	SWEDEN	1862	—
ONTARIO	1884	—	ICELAND	1882	1915
NEW BRUNSWICK	1886	—	BOHEMIA	1864	1861
NOVA SCOTIA	1887	—			

United States of America:—

WYOMING	1869	1869	ARIZONA	1912	1912
COLORADO	1893	1893	KANSAS	1887	1912
IDAHO	1896	1896	OREGON	1912	1912
UTAH	1896	1896	ALASKA	1913	1913
WASHINGTON	1910	1910	MONTANA	1914	1914
CALIFORNIA	1911	1911	NEVADA	1914	1914

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WOMEN IN WAR TIME. RAISE THE FLAG HIGH!

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an event. It would be a huge loss were to disband at a time when woman's organisation will be even more vitally needed than ever, for the vote is, after all, only a means to many ends. We venture to suggest that a more or less definite programme should be considered and put before the members, as delay at such a time would be fatal.

On the other hand, it is possible, in fact, probable, that the end of the war will find our demands still ungranted. In this case there is danger that the voice of the Women's Movement may be lost in the general after-war chaos, unless each member is ready to do her part and knows just exactly what is expected of her. This necessitates much careful preparation of plans, and a declaration of the League's policy would in this event also be needed. —Yours, in the Cause,

WINIFRED AND GRANVILLE GILES.

RAISE THE FLAG HIGH.

New friends and helpers are rising up all around us as they see the necessity for woman's co-operation in the State. To all these new friends, as well as to our old and tried supporters, we earnestly appeal to

Help us to complete our 50,000 Shilling Fund.

Every reader can send a shilling on seeing this; many can send twenty, a hundred, or more.

Do not delay, but do it now.

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THE ELECTORAL REFORM CONFERENCE.

At the time of the first meeting of the Electoral Reform Conference the Women's Freedom League sent the following telegram to the chairman:—

"Confirming our letter of October 4, please remember the women's claims."

All the Branches were asked to send a similar message, and to follow it with a letter emphasizing the necessity of including in the recommendations of the Conference to the House of Commons the urgency and justice of granting votes to women on the same qualifications as they are now or may be in the future granted to men, pointing out also how greatly women's interests will be affected by the social and industrial reconstruction that will take place after the war, and how necessary it is that women should be in a position to vote at the next general election in order to protect themselves against unfair and restrictive proposals.

The *Manchester Guardian* (October 13), in a long leading article on the Conference, says:—

It is a momentous business. Two vital questions stand out: the inclusion of women in the roll of voters, thus for the first time giving to half the nation its too-long-delayed share in the control of legislation and of policy; and the introduction of new machinery with the object of making the House of Commons more truly representative—that is, for enabling minorities to be in some degree at least represented in Parliament in proportion to their strength in the country, and making the House of Commons more nearly a true reflection of the nation.

We should hope that Woman Suffrage, since the Prime Minister has formally withdrawn his opposition, may now be regarded as in principle no longer a controversial issue. The war has taught us many things, and among others the immense power, both moral and economic, which women command within the State. If, as Sir Edward Carson has contended, the man who "is good enough to fight is good enough to vote," equally true, it must surely be admitted, is it of the women, who in a thousand ways—as workers in every unaccustomed field, as nurses and doctors actually on the scene of conflict—have risked health and life, and rendered invaluable services to the country, that the question—of course, subject to arrangements—was in the affirmative. In regard to the second, the matter was engaging the serious and sympathetic attention of the Government.

Mr. Gwynne: Is the right hon. gentleman aware of what was said in another place yesterday—that a separate Bill would be introduced to deal with this matter? Will he confirm that statement here to-day?

Mr. Asquith: I think what was said was that a Bill would be introduced to carry out the pledge given to my right hon. and learned friend, Sir Edward Carson. In connection with that Bill this other question can be raised.

Sir E. Carson: Will the Bill be brought in in this House or the other?

Mr. Asquith: Oh, in this House; it affects this House.

Mr. Gwynne: Then, if one Bill will hang on another, will the Bill enabling men to record their votes be a counterpart of the Registration Bill itself?

Mr. Asquith: I don't know what a counterpart means. (Laughter.) It has been ruled by the Chair that we cannot

introduce this matter by way of amendment to the Registration Bill; we must therefore introduce a Bill to amend the Act, and on that Bill amendments with regard to voting will be in order.

Sir E. Carson: Will my right hon. friend have the Bill so drafted that the House can raise the question of sailors and soldiers recording their votes at the front?

Mr. Asquith: Certainly, sir.

Mr. Billing asked whether, in view of the fact that the right hon. gentleman had said the proposal would have the sympathetic support of the Government, and that it was only a question of procedure, he would say that the men should have the vote.

Mr. Asquith: I did not say "sympathetic support"; I said "sympathetic attention." (Laughter.)

WOMEN IN WAR TIME.

As Foresters.

Sir John Sterling Maxwell, in a paper read at Glasgow at the concluding sitting of the National Scottish Conference on Employment on the Land, dealt with afforestation and women's employment. He declared that both were intimately connected, and that each would help in the solution of the other. There was no reason why woman should not be as supreme in the forest nursery as in her own. A woman who was a good farmer or gardener would make a good forester. "In the higher work of forestry," he added, "we look to women for assistance in research." Sir John was severe in his strictures on the Development Commission, which, he declared, had never shown a spark of enthusiasm or energy, but "went about its work like a drudge, without discernment or imagination, and never departed by a hair's-breadth from the path of extreme caution, so dear to the official mind and demanding so little exertion."

Temporary Woman Suffrage in France.

A Bill has been introduced by M. Barrès to give women the power to vote in Parliamentary elections in place of their men who are away from home on military service, so that the manless household of Trade Labour Exchanges the number of women available as substitutes for men is extraordinary. Pamphlets are being prepared by the Home Office and Board of Trade for the benefit of sceptical employers, dealing with the capabilities of women and their successful employment in flour-milling, tanning, heavy clothing factories, in chemical industries, the tobacco trade, sugar refineries, cardboard-box cutting, brewing, tarring roads, traction engine work, telephone repairs, also at slag reduction, ironstone work, as navvies in docks, scavengers, road cleaners, and at furnaces for glass bottle making. More women are wanted for munition and other war work. The London General Omnibus Co. continues to advertise for women conductors for motor-buses, wages 6s. a day minimum.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.



DARE TO BE FREE.

SEWING MEETING, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3-7 p.m.

Wednesday, October 25.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Nevinson, "The Future of Women," and Mrs. Mustard. Chair: Miss F. A. Underwood. Hostess: Miss Franklin. Tea 4.30 (6d.). Admission free.

Thursday, October 26.—L.B.C. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 144, High Holborn, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, November 1.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Zangwill, "Picking up the Pieces," and Mrs. Corner. Chair: Mrs. Mustard. Hostess: Miss Franklin. Tea 4.30 (6d.). Admission free.

Saturday, November 4.—LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL JUMBLE SALE, Tolmers-square Institute, Drummond-street, Hampstead-road, N.W.

Sunday, November 5.—RECITAL of "Fairy Tales—Old and New" by Miss Raleigh, accompanied by Folk Songs by Miss Anne Squire, at the Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C., 4 p.m. Tea served at 3.15—3.50 (6d.). Tickets 1s. and 6d., from W.F.L. Office.

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HOLLAND'S NEW CONSTITUTION: The Danger of Manhood Suffrage and Women Left Out.

Keen propaganda for woman suffrage was carried out at the opening of the Dutch Parliamentary Session, which is now considering the new Constitution. The women picketed the Parliament House, and displayed suffrage notice-boards, which were changed every day. This drew the attention of Members of Parliament to the women's claim, also of newspaper men, who were eager to interview the women.

In the new Constitution the question of including women is being debated. The women attend in the public gallery, and when any speech is made against woman suffrage they quickly note the arguments and send suitable replies to their friends in the House to be used in answer.

Although the Radical and Socialist parties have hitherto upheld the women's claim, the women have now cause to fear that the party leaders may throw them overboard in case their inclusion should stand in the way of universal male suffrage. The women, however, will continue their fight whatever may be the action of the men.

OUR OPEN COLUMN.

** Letters intended for publication must be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated by the name and address of the writer. It must be clearly understood that we do not necessarily identify ourselves with the opinions expressed.

WHEN THE VOTE IS WON.

Oswestry, Shropshire.

DEAR EDITOR,—In view of the remote possibility of the vote being won before very long, we think—and doubtless so do many members—that some pronouncement should be made at an early date of the policy of the Women's Freedom League in such an event. It would be a huge pity if our society were to disband at a time when woman's organisation will be even more vitally needed than ever, for the vote is, after all, only a means to many ends. We venture to suggest that a more or less definite programme should be considered and put before the members, as delay at such a time would be fatal.

On the other hand, it is possible, in fact, probable, that the end of the war will find our demands still ungranted. In this case there is danger that the voice of the Women's Movement may be lost in the general after-war chaos, unless each member is ready to do her part and knows just exactly what is expected of her. This necessitates much careful preparation of plans, and a declaration of the League's policy would in this event also be needed.—Yours, in the Cause,

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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.

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"AN UNANSWERABLE CASE"

(The Prime Minister)

Immersed as so many of us are in social and remedial work, through every part of which runs the bitter thread of sorrow and anxiety, and difficult as it may seem to turn our attention from the immediate business before us—nursing our wounded, feeding our prisoners in their sad exile, and caring, so far as we can and may, for the women and children who have suffered through the war—it is yet our bounden duty and service at a time supremely critical in our national history to consider the future as well as the present.

Those who, in the woman's movement, have been carefully watching the signs of the times, will no doubt feel the urgency of the situation. There are two duties facing us. We must preserve our definiteness of outlook; and we must let politicians see wherein our patriotism lies. Ready, more than ready, leaping forward to help our country in her need; for that country's sake, and that no such desperate need may ever again arise, we do not abate by one jot our demand for a voice in controlling her destinies. Indeed, the events which are happening now—the accumulated horrors which are sickening the whole of the civilized world—have given to that demand a fresh and vehement impetus.

In considering the urgent necessity for definiteness of outlook, it will be both instructive and encouraging to remember the speech of Mr. Asquith on registration and electoral reform on the 14th of August. The allusion is to the proposal to give votes to soldiers and sailors.

"The moment," said Mr. Asquith, "you begin a general enfranchisement on the lines of State Service, you are brought face to face with another most formidable proposition: What are you to do with the women?" He goes on to point out that, as regards any special desire to bring women within the pale of the franchise, his own record is clear. But—"I have received a great many representations from those who are authorised to speak for them, and I am bound to say that they presented to me not only a reasonable, but, I think, from their point of view, an unanswerable case."

We must remember, as we read those remarkable words, that the Prime Minister has never been a random speaker. We may or may not agree with what he says; but we know that he does not, like some much smaller but perhaps more popular men, fling fine words about to tickle the ears of his audiences. With him each word is measured, and each word has its own importance.

There is an even more significant statement later

in the speech. "When the war comes to an end, and when these abnormal and, to a large extent transient, conditions have to be revised, and when the process of industrial reconstruction has to be set on foot, have not the women a special claim to be heard on the many questions which will arise directly affecting their interests, and possibly meaning for them large displacements of labour? I cannot think that the House will deny that, and I say quite frankly that I cannot deny that claim."

It is impossible to read those words: the assertion that there is an "unanswerable case," and the appeal to the House of Commons not to deny the claim which he himself accepts, without feeling that in using them the Prime Minister was actuated by the same sense of justice that lay behind his fine words at the beginning of the war, in which he asserted that our country was called to arms for the freeing of oppressed nationalities and for the establishment of international righteousness.

One point is abundantly clear. We shall never have international righteousness until righteousness is observed within the nations. Bearing in view not only Mr. Asquith's speech, but also other notable contributions to the memorable debate in which he took a leading part, let us see how things stand at present. The Speaker's Conference has been constituted. In this week's issue of *The Nation* we find the following analysis:—

Taking the records of its members from 1910 to 1913 [some changes of point of view may have taken place during the last two years], there are among the British representatives, on our reckoning, fifteen suffragists, two "wobblers" who under present conditions may probably be reckoned as suffragists, and eleven decided anti-suffragists. The four Irish members are quite incalculable; on their past records they include two suffragists, one anti-suffragist, and one member (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) who has always abstained.

This, in comparison with former estimates, might seem exceedingly hopeful, Suffragists being in a decided majority were it not that the terms, which cover the whole field of electoral reform, "including franchise, registration, redistribution, and the incidence of costs," are to be, "if possible," for agreed resolutions. That means, we presume, that should the whole of the Conference be agreed on certain changes, such, for instance, as the enfranchisement of all soldiers and sailors, the tendency would be to drop out contentious resolutions. And we may be perfectly sure that unless the anti-suffragist members, emboldened to a great daring by Mr. Asquith's example, experience a "change of heart," the contentious resolution to go to the wall will be woman's suffrage.

That such a course would throw the Conference into great difficulties we can plainly see. To enfranchise the soldier and the sailor and to leave unenfranchised the women to whom, in many cases, he may owe the preservation of his life, with other women who have served untiringly at railway canteens, who have organised amusement and refreshment at camps, who have undergone training for munition work, and lost their health, sometimes their life in their arduous service, would surely be a decision difficult to justify before Parliament and the country. We think it will be found impossible. Time will show. We believe meanwhile that no finer opportunity for rendering lasting service to the country has ever been given than to this Conference convened by the Speaker to consider these tangled questions.

We do not ask for citizen-rights as in any sense a reward for service given. Indeed, if we look back to the past our claim is that the services rendered in peace time—services without which neither Army nor Navy would be possible—are, to the full, as deserving of recognition as the war services of

which we hear so much, where also an unanswerable case can be presented.

We are perfectly sure that the great majority of our fighting men are of the same opinion. Representation is no favour. To grant it as a reward for service is to degrade the idea for which it stands. Our claim and their claim stand on the same basis. The country is ours, we love her as children love a mother. Her honour, the respect in which she is held by other nations, the decent and comely ordering of her life, so that every one of her children may enjoy her wealth and delight in her beauty—these are the things which are dear to us, the woman at home, the man in the trenches, the sailor watching in his lonely post and meeting cheerfully the most terrible of risks.

Children of one mighty mother we claim, not as a reward for loving her but as a right by reason of belonging to her, that when the time for reconstruction comes we women and men-fighters and workers shall have a voice in her counsels.

This is our "unanswerable case," and it is our earnest hope that women in every part of the nation, now, when that for which they have so long striven seems almost within their grasp, will not relax from their efforts; rather that they will be more steadfast, more resolute, more united than ever before.

C. DESPARD.

WHAT OTHER WOMEN HAVE DONE.

Women suffragists have often been urged to cease their propaganda, and, to quote the latest leaflet issued by the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage, "close up their ranks and get on with the war." This appeal is made in the name of patriotism. It is an appeal familiar to Irish suffragists, who for years have been reproached with indifference to the great national issues involved in the question of Home Rule or no Home Rule, because they, as suffragists, refused to abandon their own propaganda. Now, what is the truth of the matter? To what has the patriotism of the party politician, of whatever shade of opinion, brought us in Ireland? Let the condition of our education, of our slum population in the towns, of our industries answer.

Would it have been any better had women possessed the right to vote? Let us see what has been done in Australia.

Medical inspection of school children has been provided for, and where the parents are not in a position to procure remedies for themselves, these are supplied at the school. Nurses visit the homes to ensure proper carrying out of the treatment, and where hospital care is needed, free orders are given for this.

Children left without parents or guardians are boarded out with foster mothers, and very strict registration and supervision is enforced in all these cases. The father of an illegitimate child has to provide for its support, as also in cases where a wife is deserted by the husband. In both these cases, if the order of the Court be not complied with, the offender is put to some employment, part of the proceeds of which are used for the support of the child or children, after cost of the man's board and lodging has been deducted. Such a method would do very much towards obviating the difficulty of enforcing maintenance orders, which is so serious in Ireland.

An instructive example of the effect of enfranchisement may be found in the speech of the New South Wales Premier, where special points are brought forward to attract women. These include provision of maternity wards in city and country hospitals, and of funds for travelling hospitals for

school children in thinly populated districts, compulsory notification of consumption, with strict secrecy. As regards education, further development of the system of continuation schools is promised, also of trade schools, where the elements of industrial trades will be taught, with wider extension of technical training to give full scope for the poorest child to receive the best education in his or her trade. Compare with this the exclusion of girls from trade schools in this country. Further facilities for the education of feeble-minded children in New South Wales are promised, with the formation of special ungraded classes in larger schools, where children unable to keep pace with the normal children may receive instruction in manual training suited to their mental capacity. Compare with this the economy which closes the few existing schools for these children in Great Britain and renders the establishment of any in Ireland an impossibility. Result—these children, who might have become self-supporting, remain a burden on their parents or on the State for their whole life.

One more detail. There is compulsory instruction of the elder girls in all schools in infant hygiene, cooking, dressmaking, and domestic economy.

With regard to general care of health, subsidised trained hospital and midwifery nurses are provided through the Friendly Societies, and in the country districts through the public hospitals. Depots have been established with a staff available for advice to young mothers and for home inspection of all young infants. Here also supplies of milk and infant foods can be obtained.

Lastly, let me quote a remark of the secretary to the High Commissioner of Australia: "The women in Australia have not allowed the rise in food prices which has taken place since the war in Great Britain." This effect has been obtained by the establishment of Boards of Control in districts, charged with the supervision of food prices. Children's lives are saved, health and mental development are secured, and the huge expenditure on Homes and Hospitals reduced enormously by such preventive work as is summarised above. Yet when the "settlement" of the Irish question was under consideration last June, no single politician raised his voice on behalf of the enfranchisement of Irishwomen. Let us, then, work for it ourselves, and what Australian women have done Irishwomen can do.

"It makes me ashamed when I hear what those Australian women have done with the vote, and the little trouble they had to get it, and here are we, and no one knows when justice will be done to British women! What's the use of us walking in processions to show we want to stop the drink, or starting baby clubs with milk at fivepence a quart and not a penny help from the Corporation, or trying to save with food at the price it is and nothing done to keep it down? Just think how the Australian women kept prices down with their Boards of Control! We may well be ashamed here!" These remarks by one of the audience at a suffrage meeting in the office of the Belfast Suffrage Society last week sum up the general impression of all. The speaker was Mrs. Herring from New South Wales, and those who heard her at the British Dominions Suffrage Union Conference last July will not wonder at the effect of her address. We have had good audiences at our four meetings, and a new stimulus has been given to the suffrage work by the realisation of what had been actually effected by the vote in Australia. Are we, then, so far behind our sisters that we may not be entrusted with this power?

DORA MELLONE,
Hon. Organiser Belfast Suffrage Society.

A Wise Step.

Nurses in cases of measles among the poor are to be provided by Kensington municipality.

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

A Further Insult to Women.

The Government is now crying out for educated women; it has been long in grasping the necessity and the advantage of putting into positions vacated by men women of similar standing and education. But what sort of response does the Government expect when the women already in its service—and whose praise is sounded forth continually—are treated so scurvily? Mr. McKinnon Wood announced in the House of Commons on October 12 that a war bonus dating from July 1 last is to be granted to all full time employees of Government Departments, whether established or unestablished, except those who have already received increases on account of war conditions and those engaged during the war on war conditions. Here are Mr. Wood's words:—

The amount of the bonus is 4s. a week to adult male employees whose remuneration, including allowances, etc., but excluding overtime, does not exceed 40s. a week, and 3s. a week to those whose remuneration exceeds 40s. a week, but does not exceed 60s. a week, and half these rates to women and persons under 18 years of age, within the same limits.

This is a further insult to women, whose splendid service is acclaimed far and wide. Well may the munition workers ask: Do tradesmen regulate their prices according to the sex of their customers? The burden of high prices falls as heavily on women as on men, and the impudent suggestion, made to the protesting postal employees, that they should eat cheaper food shows an intolerable blindness to the facts of the situation and woeful shortsightedness to the national loss which will result from decreased efficiency. Small wonder that Mrs. Mustard was warmly supported at our Caxton Hall meeting on October 9 when she declared that women should call a halt in giving everything for nothing.

The Imperative Need.

Will the names of the two women munition workers whose deaths were recorded on October 14 and October 16 be placed on the Roll of Honour? Lydia Elizabeth Gibson, an examiner, and Annie Kate Newson, shell-filler, have laid down their lives for their country. They have died from T.N.T. poisoning. The evidence at the inquests shows that there was lack of strict and regular enforcement of regulations for protection. Orders, it seems, have now been given for milk to be supplied, for in this dangerous work it is most important that physical strength should be well maintained. Dr. Christine Pillman, appointed under the Ministry of Munitions to examine the workers at the factory where Annie Newson was employed, stated in evidence at the inquest that arguments against the use of masks were stronger than those in favour, consequently they were not worn. These facts, and others which have been accumulating, emphasize the imperative need for women to have the practical power which the vote puts in their hands of determining the conditions under which they work.

Vital National Service.

Women who for years have been pointing out the national need of pre-natal as well as ante-natal care of children may well smile at the welcome afforded to the report just issued by the Local Government Board of its work in this important

SERBIA IN PEACE AND WAR.

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and vital matter. The urgent point is that local authorities must no longer be permitted to do as they like; compulsion must be applied if the children are to be saved. How many fights have women waged against the ignorance and prejudice of municipalities? The report pillories Camberwell, in the metropolitan boroughs, and Gateshead, in the county boroughs, as the two which fail to employ or subsidise health visitors. Why should these boroughs, with their large populations, be permitted, to the national peril, to flout Government regulations? Financial help is given by the Local Government Board, and we urge the authorities to lose no time in recognising that the responsible service of health inspectors, district nurses, doctors, and other workers must be adequately rewarded. The great war has at last revealed the urgency of the care of mothers and children. The figures are significant. In March, 1914, there were 600 visitors appointed by the local authorities; in December, 1915, 600; at the present time there are 1,090.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

Serbia and Serbian Women.

Mrs. Aldridge, who went to Serbia last year with Mrs. Stobart's Hospital Unit, was the first speaker at Caxton Hall on October 11, and she said that the history of Serbia had been one long struggle for freedom. This little country had been described as a cottage between two hotels, Austria and Turkey, and the interests of the cottage had always been overlooked or counted as the spoils of its two strong neighbours, but the people's courage and the passionate love of liberty had been kept alive largely through its wonderful ballads, composed by both men and women, and passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. During the last seven years alone 1,000,000 Serbian men had perished in warfare or in disease consequent upon warfare. Mrs. Aldridge told of the curious cry heard on Saturday nights, which seemed to express every note of human misery; it came from the churchyards, where Serbian women gather to place flowers and food on the graves of their dead, to the accompaniment of an intercession or wild chant to Heaven. At the present time Serbia is invaded on three sides by Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians; the women alone facing the invaders, as all men from 15 to 50 have been sent out of the country for military purposes. With great courage and bravery the women are keeping the homes going and producing food on their lonely farms. Two-thirds of the produce is commandeered by the invaders, said Mrs. Aldridge; Serbian women are deliberately restricting the output, leaving only a scanty supply for their own households, so that the invaders should not find the occupation of Serbia too easy a matter.

Mrs. Mustard dealt ably with the situation at home and declared that the Government could get all the educated, expert women it needed if it were willing to pay them at the same rate it would offer to men for the work; and she urged women not to be for ever ready to give of their best without demanding anything in return. It had always been said that women's political enfranchisement was not a party question, therefore *now*, when party politics are laid aside and a Coalition Government is in power, is the time for a measure of woman suffrage. The Women's Freedom League's demand was equal suffrage for men and women. As soon as the Prime Minister declared that his views on this subject had changed the Press advertised the fact throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the majority expressed full agreement. Women must do everything in their power to make votes

THEY SUPPORT US!

BRANCH NOTES.

Aintree and Waterloo.

A united meeting of the Aintree and Waterloo branches of the Women's Freedom League, and of the Bootle and District branch of the Church League for Women's Suffrage, was held in Armstrong's Café, Bootle, last week, to consider what response should be made to the desire of the Cabinet Reconstruction Committee for suggestions bearing on the problems they are to consider and advise upon, which will arise on the conclusion of peace. Mrs. Pratt presided, and after an animated discussion, showing how keenly women are interested in and affected by social and industrial problems, she put the following resolution to the meeting: "It is a condition precedent to the solution of after-war problems that women be enfranchised on as democratic a basis as men, in order that women's point of view may be presented politically, and therefore effectively. The resolution was passed unanimously and forwarded to Mr. Vaughan Nash.

Clapham.

A well-attended meeting of members was held at 46, Lynette-avenue, by kind permission of Mrs. Samuel, on October 12. The chair was taken by Mrs. Samuel, and it was decided that telegrams in the name of the Branch should be sent to the Speaker, as Chairman of the Conference on Registration and Franchise Reform, the following morning by Mrs. E. M. Moore (Battersea) and Mrs. Samuel (Clapham), urging that the claims of women to political enfranchisement should be remembered at this conference, letters to the Speaker being afterwards sent to confirm the telegrams, and copies of these letters and telegrams forwarded to the local Members of Parliament—the Right Hon. John Burns and Mr. G. Denison Faber, C.B.

Further arrangements were made for the public meeting to be held in Clapham Public Hall, Wednesday, December 6, when the speakers will be Mrs. Despard and Mr. Laurence Housman, and the chair taken by Mrs. Samuel. All members present promised to do their utmost to attend the political meeting at Caxton Hall, Friday evening, October 20, and it was agreed that £1 should be handed in at that meeting as a further instalment of Clapham Branch's contribution to the 50,000 Shilling Fund.

Croydon. Office: 32a, The Arcade, High-street.

The first public meeting of the autumn session was held on October 13, and we had the good fortune to hear from Miss Nina Boyle a splendid address on the political situation. She reminded her hearers of the particular difficulties of the present time, the folly of depending on the utterances of statesmen, the necessity for bringing women's claims before legislators while the Electoral Reform Conference is sitting, and the advisability of proving to the powers that be that women are awake and expecting justice. There was a very good attendance, and a good response to the secretary's appeal for funds. Will members and friends please let the secretary know in good time what they will contribute towards the provision stall at the Green, White and Gold Fair? Home-made jams, chutney, sweets, preserved fruit, pickles, cakes, preserved and potted meats, etc., will be most gratefully accepted.

Ipswich.

We are now working hard for the Green, White and Gold Fair, and must have a good parcel ready by the middle of November. Will members make suggestions for useful articles and novelties which can be cheaply produced? More workers are urgently needed. Every member must realise that each one who attends the meetings helps the woman suffrage cause, and each one who stays away hinders it. Please send everything you can possibly spare for the jumble sale—we must raise money for our rent.

Middlesbrough.—Suffrage Club, 232a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

A very enjoyable evening was spent at Miss Lee's "At Home" on October 9. Miss Winifred Jones presided, and Mrs. Schofield Coates gave a short address, after which Mr. White and his fellow artists contributed some delightful pianoforte selections and songs. Three new members joined us. Miss Lee, who has taken charge, hopes to have many visitors to the club and shop. The energy and confidence which she displays augurs well for the progress of the branch.

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for women an accomplished fact at the earliest possible moment.

From the chair, Miss A. A. Smith insisted that all that was now needed was for the Government to show common-sense and courage in doing justice to women. She referred to the Electoral Conference, and to the presence for the first time of a President of the United States at a Woman Suffrage Convention last month, and to President Wilson's declaration, "I have come as a suffragist to fight with you."

Women's Progress in Education in India.

Officials and laymen in India are waking up to the importance of the education of Indian girls. The number of girls' schools within a year has increased from 7,573 to 8,268 in Bengal. Special attention is drawn in the annual report to the increase of Mohammedan girls attending school. This is looked upon as remarkably encouraging. In the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh education of girls is far behind. Sir James Meston, the Lieutenant-Governor, lately presided over a meeting to discuss what could be done to help matters. He said the backward condition was attributable to a scarcity of women teachers, but added that a Government of men, which felt competent to deal with questions relating to men's education, had no such confidence where women were concerned, and thought it better to await a lead from the public, instead of giving a lead to the public. One of the results of this policy was the extreme backwardness of women's education, which in its turn kept back the men. It is interesting to note that occasionally officials find out that they are not competent to manage women's affairs, and that ultimately in mis-managing them they hurt men.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 1, Everett-street, Nine Elms, S.W.

Grateful acknowledgments to Miss Ibbotson for flowers; Mrs. Lewis, clothing; Mrs. Sharer Brooks, toys; Mrs. Miller, jumble goods and flowers; Mrs. Delbanco, 2s. for Boy Scouts. We hope readers are beginning to think what they can give us for our stall at the Green, Gold and White Fair. We are asking particularly for goods which, if unsold, will be of use in our Restaurant and Guest House, such as pounds of groceries, home-made sweets and cakes, mince-meat, tea and coffee, jam and marmalade, dairy produce, fruit and nuts, chocolates and crackers (for our Christmas treat), flowers for decorating the stall. Has any friend with a garden sweet lavender to give away for making into bags; and when are those Saturday helpers coming along?

The Despard Arms.

125, Hampstead-road, N.W.

The Despard Uniteds have begun their football season in fine form and scored good successes. From time to time last winter's members, now in khaki, come back to see us, when on leave, and enjoy the old surroundings and Miss Vicary's cakes. Next Sunday evening Mrs. Aldridge will give a talk, in the recreation room, about Serbia, at 7 p.m. All who are interested will be welcome. Our grateful thanks to Miss G. Appleton for her great kindness in sending us a Despard Arms flag, and to Miss Becher, Sanderstead, for clothes-brushes. We are still in urgent need of regular helpers from 7 to 10 p.m.; also two half-days each week, from 1 p.m. Who will volunteer?

The Flag Flying at Chester and Oswestry.

On Saturday last, Mrs. Sproson, of Wolverhampton, spoke in the Market Square at Chester. Although illness has prevented active suffrage work for over two years, she has lost none of her eloquence and enthusiasm. Later in the day she addressed a meeting at Oswestry, which Mrs. Giles and Miss Smith had worked up splendidly, but, in spite of wet and stormy weather, Mrs. Sproson held her crowd. Every number of THE VOTE was sold. Will members in Chester and Oswestry please note that the speaker next Saturday will be Miss Dorothy Evans, Market Square, 11.45 a.m., and do their utmost to support her?

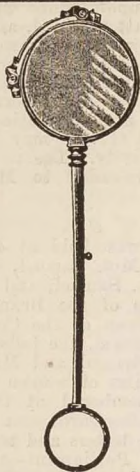
SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 1220.

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THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE will hold Public Meetings at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, every Wednesday afternoon, at 3 o'clock. October 25, Mrs. Nevinson, "The Future of Women," and Mrs. Mustard. Chair, Miss F. A. Underwood. Tea, 4.30, 6d.

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