

THE VOTE,  
APRIL 4, 1924.  
ONE PENNY.

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO-MORROW!

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 1924

**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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## VOTES FOR WOMEN MEETING.

In spite of the strike, the lack of all bus and tram facilities, and an altogether unusual amount of illness prevailing among our members and friends, we had a very enthusiastic meeting on behalf of the equal enfranchisement of men and women, on March 27th, at Essex Hall. From the Chair, Mrs. Mustard reminded us that Mr. Adamson's Bill had passed its Second Reading in the House of Commons, by a good majority, on February 29th. It had some contentious clauses, but she believed they could easily be settled in Committee, or eliminated. A measure for equal enfranchisement was long overdue; the whole of the Labour Party and the whole of the Liberal Party were pledged to it; and so were a great many Conservatives. Now was an ideal time to have such a measure in the House. Mrs. Mustard moved the following resolution, which was afterwards warmly supported by each of the speakers, and at the end of the meeting passed unanimously and with acclamation:—"That this meeting of representative members of women's organisations calls upon the Government to give full and immediate facilities to Mr. Adamson's Equal Franchise Bill now before Parliament, or themselves at once to bring in, and pass through all its stages into law, a simple equal franchise measure, so that women shall be able to vote at the next General Election at the same age and on the same terms as men."

Dr. Hanson (representing the League of the Church Militant) said there were two objections to the demand for equal franchise. (1) If all women of 21 had the vote, they would outvote men voters. The best argument against that was that it had been seen women would not all stand together; even in the Division on Mr. Adamson's Bill, two women M.P.s voted against it. (2) That women were so unstable, flighty, and revolutionary at 21; they should wait till they were 30, to gain stability. In citing her own experience, Dr. Hanson declared that at the present time, when she had a vote, she believed that all slums would one day be abolished—that London would one day become a garden city; that poverty and war would be abolished; that women would really one day have equal opportunities with men; and that even that pariah amongst women—the married woman—would one day work out her own salvation, and have equal status and rights with married men. At 21 years of age, Dr. Hanson said, she had no programme and no ideas. She was a medical student, had attended one suffrage meeting,

but was not inclined to work for the suffrage. Her only interest was whether or not the fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons would be open to women. She did not then consider that war was a crime, and she thought that poverty was essential. What harm, she asked, would her vote have done at the age of 21?

Miss Horan (representing the Women's Section of the National Union of General Workers) said she hardly knew whether to laugh or to weep, when she remembered that the British Government refused to give votes to women between the ages of 21 and 30. Ireland had done so. It could not be denied that the young women who worked in factories were interested in political affairs. They could agitate for better conditions, and go on deputations to employers and to the Government, but no one took much notice of them, because they had no political power; and this lack of political power prevented them from organising effectively to redress their grievances. They could suggest amendments to factory laws, for they had to work under them; but who cared about their suggestions? Moreover, while women under 30 had no vote, the various political Parties did not cater for them, for they were no use to them. Yet women under 30, if they had the vote, could contribute much to the political life of the country.

Lady Terrington, M.P., said that some men argued that women should wait till 25 for the vote. But, as men did not want to be disfranchised till that age, why should women? She agreed that some of the clauses in Mr. Adamson's Bill were complicated and controversial; but, with good will in the House and the Government, those difficulties could easily be overcome. Some Members seemed to be afraid of the majority rule of women, but the pioneer women in the House of Commons had done it an immense amount of good. Every minute she spent there, she realised the need for more women Members, and hoped to live to see at least a hundred. All legislation affected women, more particularly the young women. Were not the questions of war and peace, housing, low wages, education, and taxation of as much interest to young women as to young men? Were not women the first to suffer in war time, and under bad housing conditions, low wages, and high prices? Between the ages of 21 and 30, women were mothers of families, workers in professions and in industry, and there was no question dealt

with in Parliament which could be said to affect men only. The vote and the views of young people were a necessity to the country. To give the vote to women at the same age and on the same terms as men would help to do away with sex antagonism, and to give equal opportunities to all.

Miss Ursula Williams (representing the Women's National Liberal Federation) said that the time was more than ripe for women to have the Parliamentary vote on equal terms with men. In her contest at Consett (Durham) she had found it no disadvantage to be a woman candidate, but it was certainly a disadvantage to be a young woman candidate. Electors seemed to believe that, as she was not old enough to vote for a candidate, she would, if returned to Parliament, not be allowed to vote there! Yet men who looked forward to political careers started quite early to get into Parliament. The reason we wanted to get women into Parliament was that we wanted women's point of view expressed there; we also urgently needed the expression of the young women's point of view through the ballot box. She believed that, if we had equal franchise and proportional representation, we should more easily get women into Parliament. Equal franchise had passed the debatable stage; women now demanded it as a right.

Miss Anna Munro (representing the Women's Freedom League) asked what had age to do with intelligence? The women who had secured their vote had not forgotten the women left outside, and were determined to work with renewed effort to get all women inside the franchise laws at the same age and on the same terms as men. It appeared that, under the present Government, it was every whit as necessary as in the past to work as hard as ever we had worked to obtain political and other kinds of equality for women with men; but we were quite prepared to work without shirking—indeed, we gathered zest as we worked. Miss Munro concluded her speech by reading some beautiful messages from Olive Schreiner's correspondence and writings.

Miss Helen Fraser (representing the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship) said we must insist that the Government pass Mr. Adamson's Bill. In former days, women who worked for the suffrage were taunted by members of the Labour Party because they did not stand for adult suffrage. Now practically every man had the vote, but more than four and three-quarter million women over 21 years of age in this country could not exercise a vote. Democracy was being challenged all over the world. What was the Government of this country going to do on behalf of democracy? If they believed in democracy, they must bring all adult citizens into the franchise laws. For good or for evil, we were a political people; we tried to solve all social problems—among them, how to get rid of luxury at one end of the scale and destitution at the other—along the political path. Other countries might try to do this in different ways; but our position was being keenly watched by our Eastern Dependencies. Women, therefore, the young women as well as the young men, must have political education and experience. We must most strongly insist that this democratic measure of equal franchise shall be passed into law this Session.

Miss Marguerite Fedden (representing St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance) said that votes for women at the same age and on the same terms as men, was still the slogan of her Society. She remembered seeing seven little graves, in Abbeville, of young W.A.A.C.s, all under 30, who were killed on duty when the town was bombed. The young women of this country were courageous and capable of self-sacrifice, and they should have a say in the affairs of their country. But, besides the young women, many other women over 30 were shut out from the franchise: (1) the professional woman who lived in furnished lodgings; (2) the wife of the man who lived in furnished rooms (he had a vote!); (3) the daughter or sister who lived in the mother's or brother's house; (4) the woman who lived in the same house as her employer; (5) the domestic servant; (6) a

man, besides exercising a university vote, can vote on a residential qualification, and also as an occupier of business premises in two different constituencies; a woman can only vote in one; (7) the British wife of an alien cannot vote, but the British husband of an alien woman can do so; (8) a widow who gives up her home and lives with her son cannot vote; (9) the newly made widow automatically came off the register. The wretched law of coverture, a thoroughly degrading law, was responsible for many of these inequalities. It was absurd for the Government to plead that it had no time. The House had time to discuss equal rights for the clergy, quite recently, and at least on two occasions lately the House had nothing at all to do for some hours!

Miss F. E. James (representing the Federation of Women Civil Servants) said that there were thousands of women in the Civil Service, between the ages of 21 and 30, doing work of national importance, and paying income tax, who yet were not able to vote. There were many others over 30 who were also disqualified on technical grounds; and her opinion was that there was a definite attempt made by men, through these technicalities, to keep the women electorate as low as possible throughout the country. Miss James told the audience of her own difficulty to get on to the Register, because she chose to live at home with her mother, instead of taking a lodging with other people. For two years she fought the case, and went from one authority to another before she could get her name on to the Register. What man would take that trouble? She lived in Battersea, where, for economic reasons, the vast majority of working-women lived with their parents. She urged every woman to go to any amount of trouble to get on to the Parliamentary Register, and to work with might and main to get the franchise laws equal for men and women.

Dr. Knight made a stirring appeal for funds to carry on our Equal Franchise Campaign. She urged that women must use every effort to get this measure of justice through NOW—a General Election might be sprung upon us at any time.

We offer our warmest thanks to all the speakers at this meeting; to Miss E. Morton, who so kindly organised the stewarding; and to all the stewards who came to help us from other Societies, as well as to those from our own League.

### WOMEN POLICE.

A deputation to press for the appointment of more Women Police, and to urge that effect should be given to the recommendations of the Home Office Committee set up in February, 1920, was received last week by the Home Secretary. Sir John Anderson and the Secretary for Scotland were also present. The deputation was organised by the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, and 52 representatives from national societies were present, including the Women's Freedom League, which was represented by Mrs. Dexter.

The Home Secretary, before inviting the speakers to state their case, said the Home Office was much interested in the subject, and was anxious to review the question in the light of the three and a half years' experience since 1920. He therefore proposed to set up a Committee to review the experience available as to the employment of Women Police, and to make recommendations as to their future organisation and duties. "You are pushing an open door," he said. "You may take it from me that the principle of Women Police is taken for granted."

Lord Astor thanked the Home Secretary for the very encouraging statement he had made. The speakers were Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, M.P., for Women Police in the Metropolis, Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., for the country, and Miss Tancred for Scotland. Mrs. Dexter spoke to Lord Astor and Mrs. Wintringham at the close of the meeting, and both expressed themselves well satisfied with the result of the deputation.

## IN PARLIAMENT.

### Army Widows' Pensions.

CAPT. TERRELL (Henley) asked the Secretary of State for War if his Department would consider the desirability of establishing some contributory pension scheme which would meet the requirements of widows of all ranks, with special reference to the position of the long-service soldier's widow? MR. WALSH replied that he was not aware of any desire on the part of the Army for a contributory pension scheme, and he did not think that the existing provisions of the Royal Warrant need be extended. Those provisions already secured widows' pensions for all ranks in cases where death was directly attributable to military service.

### Married Women Teachers.

MR. A. T. DAVIES (Lincoln) asked the President of the Board of Education what number of Education Committees now refused to employ married women teachers; what number employed such teachers; what authority, if any, the Board of Education had in those appointments; and what was the objection of the Board to securing uniformity of appointments in all areas? MR. TREVELYAN said he regretted he had no official statistics on the point. The only information at his disposal was that which had appeared from time to time in the newspapers, from which he gathered that in some 105 areas the Education Committee had recommended that married women teachers should not be employed, or should cease to be employed. Those resolutions, however, were usually subject to exceptions and qualifications. The matter lay within the discretion of local education authorities, and he saw no occasion for intervention on his part.

### Uncertificated Teachers.

MR. GRAHAM WHITE (Birkenhead, E.) asked the President of the Board of Education if it was the intention of the Board to fix a date after which no new uncertificated teachers would be appointed? MR. TREVELYAN replied that, while he was very desirous of increasing the proportion of fully qualified teachers, and reducing the proportion of other teachers, it would not be practicable, at all events at present, to deal with the matter in the way suggested in the hon. Member's question. MR. WHITE then asked the approximate number of uncertificated teachers at present employed in the elementary schools? MR. TREVELYAN said that the approximate number upon the basis of returns made by Local Education Authorities for December 31st, 1923, was 32,000.

### Women Prisoners.

MR. PETHICK LAWRENCE (Leicester, W.), on behalf of VISCONTRESS ASTOR (Sutton, Plymouth) asked the Home Secretary if he was aware that women prisoners sentenced to penal servitude, who were removed from Aylesbury to Walton Prison, Liverpool, as a temporary measure during the war, were still confined in one block of that prison; and if he was taking any action for removing those long-sentence prisoners to a prison where they could have the same facilities for outdoor work and exercise which they had at Aylesbury, and which were granted to male prisoners serving similar sentences? MR. HENDERSON replied that it was not at present possible to make any other arrangements for the confinement of those women. Facilities for work and recreation were given to the convicts in the garden and grounds outside the prison walls at Liverpool. It was not correct to say that the women were transferred as a temporary measure during the war. It was considered that the Aylesbury premises should be devoted to a more pressing purpose.

### Child Assault.

LT.-COL. RUDKIN (Chichester) asked the Home Secretary if his attention had been called to the increasingly numerous cases of child assault; and if he would con-

sider the advisability of appointing a committee, including medical and legal experts, to inquire into those matters and the ratio of convictions obtained in the cases known to the police, the best means of preventing those offences and of dealing with the offenders, and as to the adequacy of the provisions made to protect children and the provision made for the unfortunate victims? MR. HENDERSON replied that a conference had been held at the Home Office, when the matter had been fully discussed. He was now considering the appointment of a suitable Committee for investigation and report. He added that there was no evidence of any increase in the number of those offences over a period of 25 years.

### Mentally Deficient Prisoners.

MAJOR SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (Caithness and Sutherland) asked the Home Secretary if his attention had been called to the statement in the Report of the Prison Commissioners for the year ending March 31st, 1923, with regard to the presence in prison of a class of prisoners who, on account of mental retardation or mental instability, or both, were incapable of profiting by training and discipline, and to a statement by the Commissioners that there was a need for a special form of curative treatment, under a specially trained staff, in an environment other than that of a prison, for those persons; and if he proposed to take any steps to give effect to that recommendation? MR. HENDERSON replied that a scheme was now being prepared by the Commissioners to collect unstable mental cases, not certifiable under the Lunacy or Mental Deficiency Acts, and sentenced to imprisonment long enough to justify transfer, in certain selected centres, and to place them under the tuition of a specially trained staff and close medical observation.

### Lunacy Laws.

MR. COSTELLO (Huntingdon) asked the Prime Minister if he was aware that all inquiries hitherto instituted into the administration of the Lunacy Laws had been unsatisfactory; and, in order to secure an absolutely unbiased and impartial inquiry by the proposed Royal Commission, would he see to it that all interested parties should be excluded from the tribunal as judges, but should have the opportunity of giving evidence before the Commission, subject to cross-examination? MR. WHEATLEY replied that he could not accept the view suggested in the first part of the question regarding previous inquiries into the administration of the Lunacy Acts. It was, however, hardly necessary to say that, in constituting any body to inquire into the Lunacy Laws, the considerations urged by the hon. Member would be borne in mind.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) asked the Prime Minister if his attention had been called to the fact that, in the process of certification of an alleged lunatic as ordinarily conducted, the magistrate only heard evidence against the sanity of the individual; and if he would bring in legislation enabling the alleged lunatic to have the opportunity, if he so desired, of having his case placed before the magistrate by his legal adviser, who should be entitled to test the adverse evidence by cross-examination, and, if necessary, to call rebutting evidence? THE PRIME MINISTER replied that the points raised by the right hon. Member would, no doubt, be considered by any Commission that might be appointed to inquire into the lunacy laws; but he could not give any undertaking to introduce legislation in anticipation of such an inquiry.

*The Women's Freedom League has urged upon the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health that women should be adequately represented on any Committee or Commission appointed to consider the Lunacy Laws; and that especially one medical woman should be included, and one public woman who has had experience on Asylums Visiting Committees.* F. A. U.

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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.

### "PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PARTIES!"

The above was the title of an excellent Presidential address given by Miss Eleanor Rathbone at the Annual Council Meeting of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, held at St. George's Hall, Y.M.C.A., Tottenham Court Road, last week. After stating that those of us who were engaged in the Suffrage movement had had a long training in the part of Sisyphus (who in the nether world was doomed to perform the endless task of rolling up a hill a heavy stone, which, as soon as it reached the top, always rolled down again), Miss Rathbone reviewed the numbers of women's Bills which had come before Parliament, time after time, since the war, and were not yet on the Statute-book. We are in entire agreement with her when she said that, "whatever our Party sympathies might be individually, we must all have felt that, for the cause of equal citizenship, the return of a Labour Government to office should presage great things. . . . But the events of the last few weeks have certainly given us qualms, and have sometimes caused us to rub our eyes in astonishment. The greatest surprise has been the Government's attitude on the question of equal franchise." Miss Rathbone scathingly criticised the statements of the Lord Privy Seal (Mr. Clynes) and the Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs (Mr. Rhys Davies) in the Second Reading Debate, showing clearly the Government's lack of intention and lack of courage as to the further stages of the Bill, as well as the attitude adopted by Mr. Snowden in regard to Widows' Pensions. Women have certainly had no cause to trust any political Party in the past, where women's interests were specially concerned, and we should hardly have thought they would have to re-learn that lesson; and we whole-heartedly endorse Miss Rathbone's concluding remarks: "All I have been saying merely confirms a truth which past experience has repeatedly brought home to us, that, while our cause may have more affinity with some forms of political belief than with others, it cannot be identified with any political Party, since it here appeals to sympathies, and there arouses prejudices, which are independent of Party, of class, or time, and lie very deep down in masculine human nature. Therefore, we would do well, while showing gratitude to our supporters and trust in our tried friends, not to let either emotion lull us into over-confidence. Let us keep our political armour bright, and our powder dry. We are a long way from the Millennium yet."

Only one statement in Miss Rathbone's address do we venture to refute—that the Pre-War Practices (Restoration) Act was not resisted by any women's organisation. In June, 1919, this Bill, which for the first time proposed to place a legal bar against the continued employment of women in many industries, was considered by the Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League, and from that time it was opposed by us by every means in our power. It was urged on its behalf that this was only to be a temporary measure, and that it was the result of a bargain made between Members of the Government, employers, and trade unionists. We quite understood that; but, in our view, it was a bargain which would have been more

honoured in the breaking than in being kept. While the women were working with might and main in the engineering and other shops, in response to their country's call, this bargain was made by the men, over the heads of the women, and without consulting them, to turn them out of their jobs at the end of the war, and to forbid employers to employ them for at least a year, unless the women had before the war worked in those particular trades and sections of trades. We had leaflets printed, protesting against this injustice, and distributed them at the Labour Congress held at Southport in 1919; and through THE VOTE, by correspondence with Members of the Government and Members of Parliament, as well as at meetings, we did everything in our power to resist this measure. It went through; women were thrown out of work, and the factories and workshops throughout the land were structurally altered for the accommodation of men only. Later, it was forbidden to employ women on night work. The women who came under the provisions of the Pre-War Practices (Restoration) Act were, of course, in the very large majority of cases, under 30 years of age, and therefore voteless and without political influence. The great majority of unemployed women to-day are voteless, and the only help for them, so far as we are able to judge, is for them to secure the Parliamentary vote at 21 years of age, on a short residential qualification. They belong to the working class; a Labour Government is in power. Will the Labour Party help them by giving them equal political power with men?

### SOLICITATION LAWS

Over and over again we have urged that, when any girl, woman, or man is charged with soliciting, that charge should be substantiated in Court by the person annoyed or molested, and that the defendant should not be convicted on police evidence only. Yet every year about 2,000 women and girls are arrested in London alone for "soliciting"; in England and Wales, approximately three thousand women and girls are imprisoned, and another three thousand fined for this offence—in the vast majority of cases on police evidence only. It is true that men are in rare cases treated in the same way; but they nearly always appeal against conviction, and almost invariably win on appeal. If a woman can get legal defence, she also almost always gets off. But what chance has an ordinary woman or girl, charged by a policeman with soliciting, of being able to secure legal defence? Last Monday, Mr. Dunnic (Consett) asked the Home Secretary if he was aware that the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, and the Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847, which regulated and controlled the present soliciting laws, often operated unjustly, and if he was prepared to consider dealing with all such offences under the Vagrancy Act of 1898, and of making a conviction conditional upon the person annoyed giving evidence? In our view, Mr. Henderson's reply was very disappointing. He said that solicitation by common prostitutes (a prostitute, in the eyes of the law, can only be a woman!) was punishable under the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, and the Town Police Clauses Act, if there was evidence that it caused annoyance in the public street. Mr. Henderson did not think it desirable to limit the discretion of magistrates in deciding what evidence was necessary to prove the offence in particular cases. Under the Vagrancy Act, 1898, solicitation by male persons in any public place was punishable without proof of annoyance. That Act did not apply to women.

We think it manifestly unfair that either men or women should, for such an offence as this, be charged and convicted on police evidence only. It is not the magistrate who decides what evidence is necessary in these cases, but the law of the land, which allows a person to be convicted on police evidence only. It is that law we want altered; we want the person who is said to be "annoyed" or "molested" to appear in Court to substantiate the charge, before the accused person can be convicted.

## WOMEN LIBERALS IN CONFERENCE.

The Preliminary Agenda for the Council Meetings of the Women's National Liberal Federation, which are to be held at the Kingsway Hall on May 27th, 28th, and 29th, has just been issued. Some of the resolutions on that agenda are of special interest to readers of THE VOTE. A general resolution pledges the Council to continued support of Equal Franchise, Temperance Reform, the Guardianship of Infants Bill, the Separation and Maintenance Orders Bill, and the Legitimacy Bill. Another resolution reaffirms the Council's belief that Proportional Representation is the measure best calculated to secure just representation of the will of the people, and calls upon Liberals to use every effort to get this reform before the next General Election. The Taxation of Land Values is advocated as a means of solving both the Land and Housing problems. In a resolution dealing with Women and Child Labour, the Council calls for the complete and early enactment of the conventions concerning women's and children's labour passed at Washington (1919). A resolution dealing with Juvenile Offenders urges that all children taken to Juvenile Courts should have specialised service for probation, for social investigation, and for medical and mental examination; that there should be privacy in all the hearings of such cases, and no publicity in regard to facts brought out in the hearings. The appointment of probation officers, male and female, is called for, by each bench of magistrates. Another resolution calls for the organisation of a campaign to secure Women Police in all towns.

In view of the recent disclosures in the House of Commons in regard to the regulation of Prostitution in Hong Kong, we are glad to see the following resolution on the Liberal Women's Agenda:—"That, in the interest of health, moral and physical, this Council calls

upon the Government to investigate the conditions existing in Crown Colonies with regard to State Regulation of Vice, and to take such steps, by introducing legislation, or otherwise, as will bring the laws of every Crown Colony into harmony with British law, and will put an end to the toleration of brothels and disorderly houses, and such other evils as are known to prevail in Hong Kong." A resolution dealing with Education calls for the restoration of the provisions of the Fisher Education Act of 1918; for the initiation of further progress in Elementary, Secondary, University, and Adult Education; and for educational provision for children over 14, either by raising the school-leaving age or by day continuation schools. A resolution on the Treatment of Mentally Defective Children demands that the compulsory payment of weekly sums by the parents for the maintenance of such children should be dropped, and that those children should not be returned to their homes for the holidays unless it is certified by an independent medical practitioner that it is for their good.

Other resolutions deal with Free Trade, Industrial Policy and Transport, with special reference to high railway freights. There is also a very comprehensive resolution on Insurance, which calls for a more generous scheme of Unemployment Insurance; the establishment of a National Health Insurance on a family basis; a scheme of Superannuation, in the form of deferred benefits, to supplement the lack of full earning capacity above the age of 60, together with the removal of the trifling disqualification from Old Age Pensions; and the establishment of pensions for widows of insured persons with dependent children.

Our readers will agree that this agenda covers a good deal of ground, and shows clearly that it is idle to pretend nowadays that women take no interest in politics or matters outside their own home.

## HOW WE TREAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Without doubt, there is some connection between juvenile unemployment and juvenile delinquency. We appreciate and admire Lady Astor's persistent efforts during the lifetime of the last two Governments, as well as of the present one, to secure the establishment and continuance of juvenile unemployment centres, where young people can be kept occupied and in training, instead of having to run the streets, while unemployment is so acute in the country. Last week she asked the Prime Minister to give some indication of the policy which the Government intended to pursue towards these juvenile unemployment centres when the period for which the present grants were made came to an end this month; and we are glad to note that Mr. Shaw (Minister of Labour), who had been asked to reply, said that it was the policy of the Government to give all possible encouragement to those centres. He added that the period of grant had been extended to March 31st, 1925, and that the rate of grant as from April 1st, 1924, was to be 100 per cent. of approved out-of-pocket expenditure, so long as unemployment among boys and girls remained at its present level. Lady Astor then asked the Minister of Labour if he did not think that one of the best ways of dealing with the matter of juvenile unemployment was for the Government to raise the school-leaving age to 15; but Mr. Shaw replied that he did not think that arose out of the question.

The question of juvenile offenders was brought up in the House of Commons, on March 27th, by Mr. Pethick Lawrence, who asked the Home Secretary if his attention had been called to the fact that, during the year ending March 31st, 1923, 2,987 lads, of whom 53 per cent. had not previously been convicted, and 337 girls, of whom 46 per cent. had not previously been convicted, were received, upon conviction, into the ordinary prisons of the country, excluding Borstal cases, and to the fact that, of 1,663 of these lads who

were sentenced for a month or less, 40 per cent. were committed in default of payment of fines; and if, in view of the Commissioners' statement that the experience of another year confirmed the opinion expressed last year, that persons under 21, if they continued to be committed to prison, should be placed in separate establishments in which there were no adults, he proposed to take steps to establish such separate institutions? Mr. Henderson, the Home Secretary, replied that he regretted there were no funds available at present for establishing separate prisons for offenders under 21 sentenced to imprisonment in every part of the country; but they were separated from adult offenders so far as circumstances allowed. To a further question put by Mr. Pethick Lawrence, the Home Secretary replied that he could not say action would be taken shortly. He was then asked by Mr. Alden (Tottenham, S.) if he would grant a return of the juvenile offenders sent to certified schools, who had never been placed on probation, and who had not come from bad homes? Mr. Henderson, replying in the negative, said he regretted that this information could not be given.

The same day, Mr. Groves (Stratford) asked the Home Secretary if he would investigate the whole of the circumstances attending the presence of five lads, one of whom was 14, three 16, and one 17, at the ordinary public police court of West Ham on Tuesday, March 25th; if he was aware that those lads were summoned for damaging a quantity of materials used in connection with road work, that they were prosecuted through a solicitor, they themselves having no such defence, the result of which was that sentences of six week's imprisonment were imposed upon two of the lads, three weeks upon one lad, two weeks upon another, and the youngest lad was remanded in custody? Mr. Groves further inquired if the Home Secretary would remit those sentences? Mr. Henderson replied that he was making inquiries into the case.

A still more disgraceful case is reported in last Saturday's *Surrey Comet*. Two lads who were convicted of stealing cigarettes, valued at 3s., were sentenced to two months' hard labour by the Kingston borough magistrates! We are glad to note that Major Church, M.P., is presenting a petition to the Home Secretary, signed by local residents, for their reprieve. The ends of justice are not served by sentences of this character, and we hope that in the near future all magistrates who have no fitter sense of justice than that which seemed to pervade the Kingston magistrates will be debarred for ever from serving on any magistrates' bench. Their places could so easily be filled by sensible women, with much benefit to the community.

It is, of course, well known that boys under 16 are regularly employed in our coal mines, and, in reply to a question by Mr. Hayday (Nottingham, W.), Mr. Shinwell (Parliamentary Secretary, Mines Department) said that 41 boys under 16 years of age employed underground at mines in Great Britain were killed during the year 1922, and 8,005 were disabled for more than seven days. The comparable figures for 1923 were 65 and 9,907, respectively.

### BILLS IN PARLIAMENT.

The Legitimacy Bill, "to amend the law relating to children born out of wedlock," has passed through the House of Lords.

The text of the Guardianship, etc., of Infants Bill, presented in the House of Commons by Mrs. Wintringham, has just been issued. This Bill proposes to amend the law as to the rights and responsibilities of parents with respect to the guardianship, custody, and maintenance of their legitimate children. It repeals the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886, but substantially re-enacts it, with amendments. The Bill provides that the mother of every legitimate infant shall be guardian jointly with the father, for all purposes, and have equal authority, rights, and responsibilities. The Bill further provides that the parents of every legitimate infant under 16 shall both be liable for the maintenance and education of that infant, according to their means. The Bill also comprises powers to enforce orders made by the Court regarding the custody, maintenance, and education of infants. This Bill is supported by Lady Astor, Lady Terrington, Mr. I. Foot, Sir Robert Newman, Mr. Pethick Lawrence, and others; its Second Reading is expected to-day.

The Education (Employment of Young Persons) Bill, presented by Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, and supported by Capt. Wedgwood Benn, Mr. F. Briant, Mr. Snell, Sir Robert Newman, and Mr. Turner, enacts that the provisions of the Education Act, 1921, relating to the power of making by-laws and granting licences with regard to the employment of children and young persons, shall be extended so as to refer to persons under the age of 18; and by-laws under that Act may prescribe the days on which employment is illegal, and prohibit employment absolutely, or permit it subject to conditions.

The Representation of the People Act (1918) Amendment (No. 2) Bill, presented by Mr. Rendall, and supported by Mr. Geoffrey Howard, Sir Arthur Morrison-Bell, Mrs. Wintringham, Mr. John Jones, and others, is a Bill to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1918, in respect of the method of election. This Bill would introduce the single transferable vote, and, where there are two or more Members to be elected, the election would be according to the principle of proportional representation. It also outlines a scheme for the grouping of constituencies. The Second Reading of this Bill is to be taken May 2nd.

### THEATRE TICKETS.

We now have a Theatre Ticket Agency; so, when you want to book seats for the theatre, 'phone Museum 1429, or send to THE VOTE Office, 144, High Holborn, W.C.1. Do this, and you will be helping THE VOTE.

## WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

### Women and the Wheat Pit.

Women, as well as men, are working successfully as wheat dealers in the big Middle West towns of America. They are not allowed on the floor of the Wheat Pit itself, but employ male partners for this purpose, whilst they sit up aloft in the gallery, carefully watching the prices as they are chalked upon a board. Occasionally the women make signals to their men below, if they think the time has come to buy or sell.

### American Woman's Achievement.

The restoration of the devastated village of Hatton Chatel, in France, to its pre-war beauty is due to the efforts of Miss Belle Skinner, a graduate of Vassar. During the excavations, a sack containing 400 gold coins was discovered, all dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, and some of them without equals in any collection. The rarest of the coins have been presented to French museums, and the remainder are being sold to further the restoration work.

### Canadian Women Citizens.

A list of legislative requests has been presented to the Ontario Government by the National Council of Canadian women. These requests include service on juries by women over 30 years of age, enactment of a town-planning law for Ontario, compulsory training course for immigrant girls, and that the inspection of immigrant children in Ontario be placed under provincial authority.

### A Lonely Job.

Miss E. L. Turner, the famous naturalist, who has been appointed bird-watcher on Scott Head Island, opposite Brancaster, for the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, takes up her duties this week. The island, which is about two square miles in extent, composed largely of sand-dunes, has only one hut on it, where Miss Turner will live entirely alone for the next six months, provisions being brought her at intervals by boat from the mainland. Miss Turner is a Fellow of the Linnæan Society, and was one of the first women to be elected to this ancient Society.

### Jewish Women Agriculturists.

A school of agriculture for young Jewish women, which will fit them to undertake farming in Palestine, is in process of building at Nahalal, near Haifa. The International Women's Zionist Organisation made itself responsible at the last Congress for the upkeep of the school, and is devoting a great part of its energy to the collection of funds necessary for the building. The stables, poultry yard, and tree nurseries in Nahalal are already completed, and a group of girl students, under expert instructors, have begun their studies.

### "Girls' Week" in Chicago.

"Girls' Week," intended to supplement "Boys' Week," will be launched in Chicago this month, when the schools will direct attention to the work of girls and women in every line. Prominent Chicago women, including Miss Jane Addams and Judge Mary Bartelme, will speak before school assemblies. The League of Women Voters is preparing a pageant, showing the advance of women in civic rights.

### Women Inventors.

At the annual banquet of the Institute of Patentees, at the Hotel Cecil, last week, Miss C. Haslett (Secretary of the Women Engineers' Society) said that there were 50 women members of the Institute of Patentees, who had invented domestic appliances, electrical devices, and furniture.

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## Women's Freedom League.

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General Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, April 4th, at 11 a.m. Organisation Sub-Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Friday, April 4th, at 2.30 p.m. National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Saturday, April 5th, at 10 a.m. Caxton Hall, Westminster. Women's Freedom League Seventeenth Annual Conference. Address by Miss Elsie Morton, M.B.E., on "How to make the work of the Women's Freedom League effective," at 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 6th, at 3.30 p.m. Tea and Reception at the Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C.1, to delegates, members and friends. Visitors are especially invited.

Monday, April 7th. Jumble Sale, at Bosworth Hall, Bosworth Road, Kensington.

Friday, April 11th, at 5 p.m. Conference on Personal Hygiene, at 25 Wimpole Street. Speakers: Dr. Lewin, Dr. Lucy Naish, Dr. Jane Walker, and others. All interested are welcome.

Friday, April 25th at 8 p.m. Thames Valley Branch. Public Meeting, at Holmwood, Waldegrave Road, Teddington. Speaker: Chief Inspector Champneys, of the Women's Auxiliary Police Service. Subject: "The need for Women Police."

Wednesday, April 30th, at 8 p.m. Hampstead Branch Meeting (open to non-members), at the Isis Club, 79, Fitzjohn's Avenue, N.W.3. (by kind permission of Mrs. Harverson). Speaker: Mrs. Miall Smith, B.A. Subject: "Poor Law, and Reform." Chair: Mrs. Hornibrook.

Monday, May 5th, at 3 p.m. Hampstead Branch Meeting (Members only), at 62, High Street, N.W.3. (by kind permission of Miss Goodliffe and Miss Vibert).

Friday, May 16th, at 3 p.m. "Fair" Sub-Committee, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

### PROVINCES.

Monday, April 14th, at 7.30 p.m. Middlesbrough. Meeting at Suffrage Café to discuss Conference Report.

Tuesday, April 8th, at 7.30 p.m. Portsmouth. Public Meeting at 2, Kent Road. Speaker: Miss Eva Clark. Subject: "The new Children's Charter."

Friday, April 25th, at 6.30 p.m. Ashford. Public Meeting at the Assembly Room, Bank Street. Speaker: Mrs. Northcroft. Subject: "Women at Work in the League of Nations." Chair: H. Lee, Esq., J.P. (Hon. Sec. League of Nations Union, Ashford Branch.)

Friday, May 2nd, at 3.30 p.m. Bexhill. Public Meeting, at the Social Centre, Station Road. Speaker: Dr. Octavia Lewin. Subject: "Citizenship."

### OTHER SOCIETIES.

Wednesday, April 9th, at 8 p.m. Women's League of Union, Oak Room, Kingsway Hall, W.C. Speaker: Miss Somers. Subject: "Women and Labour."

Thursday, April 24th, at 8 p.m. Theosophical Society Meeting, at the Dharmalodge, 23, Adelaide Road, Surbiton. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood. Subject: "The Aims and Work of the Women's Freedom League."

### BRANCH NOTES.

#### BRIGHTON AND HOVE.

A successful meeting was held on Friday, March 21st, at 7, Norfolk Terrace, Brighton, by kind permission of Mrs. Bridge, with Councillor Mrs. Smith, J.P., in the Chair. Mrs. Dexter, who had come from Headquarters to inaugurate the revival of the branch in Brighton and Hove, gave a most interesting account of the work which is being done in London and elsewhere. She also read the main resolutions on the Agenda for the forthcoming Conference, and an interesting discussion followed. Mrs. Bridge was appointed as delegate to the Conference. A resolution urging local M.P.s to vote for the Bill now before Parliament was put to the meeting and passed unanimously. Mrs. Smith, J.P., had made a special effort to attend, and this was fully appreciated by the audience. Mrs. Dexter was also thanked for coming from London to speak, and Mrs. Bridge for lending her room. (Hon. Sec.) Mrs. PETERS, "Sunways," York Avenue, Hove.

#### THAMES VALLEY.

A Members' Meeting was held at "Holmwood," Waldegrave Road, Teddington (by kind permission of Mrs. Foster Lumb), last Tuesday evening. It was decided to ask permission from

the Conference for this branch to be represented. The resolutions and amendments were considered and discussed, and Miss F. Brewer and Miss Warrenner were appointed as joint delegates to the Conference, other branch members also promising to be present.

The following resolution was passed unanimously, Miss Underwood being in the Chair, and copies afterwards were sent to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary, the local Members of Parliament, and to the local Press:—"That this meeting of the members of the Thames Valley Branch of the Women's Freedom League strongly protests against the sentence of two months' hard labour recently inflicted by the Kingston borough magistrates upon two lads for stealing cigarettes valued at three shillings. The branch members are of the opinion that such a sentence in no way serves the ends of justice, and calls upon the Lord Chancellor to appoint more women to the Kingston bench of magistrates, and upon the Home Secretary to appoint local women police, who would be able to deal with some of the delinquency of, and to protect, the young people in the district."

We appeal to all local members and friends to bring all the people they possibly can to the public meeting we have arranged at "Holmwood," on Friday, April 25th, at 8 p.m., when Chief Inspector Champneys (of the Women's Auxiliary Police Service) will speak on "The Need for Women Police."

(Hon. Sec.) Miss F. BREWER, 15, Fleece Road, Ditton Hill, Surbiton.

#### MIDDLESBROUGH.

At a meeting of the Women's Freedom League, held in the Suffrage Café, Linthorpe Road, on Monday, March 31st, the children of the Play Centre (Newport Road School) gave a very delightful display of rhythmic dancing to a large and appreciative audience. Our thanks are due to Miss K. Bowen, Headmistress, for the time and trouble taken to bring happiness into the lives of these little ones. Mrs. Schofield Coates spoke on the Women's Freedom League, and invited all present to enrol themselves as members. Refreshments were handed round. Three new members gave in their names.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 14th, at 7.30, when a hearty invitation is extended to friends to come and hear the report of our 17th Annual Conference.

(Hon. Sec.) Mrs. H. HUGHES, 35, Kildare Street, Middlesbrough.

#### HASTINGS.

The Annual Meeting was held at the Glenroyde Hotel on Monday, March 31st, at 3.30 p.m. There was a large attendance of members. Miss A. K. Rance presided. The annual report and balance-sheet were read and adopted.

Four resolutions were passed:—

(1) "That the Annual General Meeting of the Hastings and St. Leonards Branch of the Women's Freedom League reaffirms its faith in the non-Party Election policy of the League as adopted at successive Annual General Meetings of the branch, and Annual Conferences of the branches at Headquarters."

(2) "That this meeting of the Hastings and St. Leonards Branch of the Women's Freedom League urges the Government sitting to give immediate and full facilities for Mr. Adamson's Equal Franchise Bill, or themselves to bring in at once a simple Equal Franchise measure, and pass it through all its stages into law, so that women shall be able to vote on the same terms and at the same age as men, at the next General Election."

(3) "That a resolution from this local Society be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Health, urging that part of the surplus funds from last year's Budget be used for the provision of Widows' Pensions."

(4) "That a set of rules be drawn up for the guidance of the local branch of the Women's Freedom League."

The officers and committee elected are:—President, Mrs. Darent Harrison; Vice-Presidents, Madame Osterveen and Mrs. Pre-looker; Hon. Secretary, Miss Baenziger; Hon. Treasurer, Miss A. Kate Rance; Committee, Mrs. Strickland, Mrs. Felton Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Callon, Mrs. Mellis, Miss Bentley, Miss Vicat Cole. The resolutions and amendments, etc., for the Annual Conference were read, and the delegate, Miss A. K. Rance, was instructed how to vote on them.

(Hon. Sec.) I. E. BAENZIGER, 44, King's Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea.

## W.F.L. PAMPHLETS.

"The Work for Women M.P.s," by Miss Helena Normanton, B.A. ... 3d.  
 "The Need for Women Members of Parliament," (Second Edition), by Mrs. How Martyn, M.Sc. 3d.  
 "Women's Right to Work," by Miss Lind-af-Hageby 3d.  
 "Women and Income Tax," by Mrs. Ayres Purdie (Certified Accountant) ... 3d.  
 "Race Motherhood. Is Woman the Race?" by Mrs. Montefiore ... 6d.  
 "Women Police," a short history from its inception to the present day ... 1d.  
 "Women at Work in the League of Nations," by D. M. Northcroft ... 6d.  
 "The Wrongs of Married Women," by Mrs. M. W. Nevinson, J.P., LL.A. ... 3d.  
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## NOTICES.

**FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.**—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, April 6th. 3.30. Music, Lecture, Rev. Hudson Shaw: "Life and Work of John Ruskin." (Music for April will illustrate the Works of J. S. Bach.) 6.30. Miss Maude Royden: "Lead us not into Temptation."

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