

THE VOTE.
OCTOBER 12, 1917
ONE PENNY.

Wives and Income Tax.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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Edited by C. DESPARD.

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

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WOMEN AND THE LABOUR PARTY

A week or two ago I wrote, in "Political Notes" in THE VOTE, the following paragraph:—

WHAT OF THE WOMEN?

So far as one can see, or guess, the forces of Labour are prepared to use the impetus of women's enfranchisement for the strengthening of their own position. There are already creakings and gratings of the stiff machinery; there is a cry going round: "Organise the women voters; educate the women voters." For whose benefit, we ask? Educate them in whose rights, which principles?

In last Monday's *Daily Telegraph* the situation is thus set forth:—

AN AMBITIOUS SCHEME. *From Our Labour Correspondent.*

The Labour Party intends to make a bold bid for supremacy in the next House of Commons. It has decided to put forward at least 300 candidates for industrial constituencies in England, Scotland, and Wales at the next General Election. This momentous political scheme was thus unassumingly announced by the executive of the party:—

"In view of the situation which must follow the coming into operation of the Representation of the People Bill, it is the opinion of many in the Labour movement that the executive should make the necessary arrangements to enable the Labour movement to take full advantage of the position. After a full consideration of the whole position, it was unanimously agreed that a committee, consisting of Messrs. W. F. Purdy, J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., G. J. Wardle, M.P., R. Wake, Sidney Webb, W. C. Robinson, and Arthur Henderson, M.P., should consider and prepare a scheme of reorganisation and report as early as possible."

This is the modest way in which Labour has launched the most ambitious scheme which has yet been framed for securing predominant power in the House of Commons. Mr. Arthur Henderson having retired from the War Cabinet, with its exacting claims, has agreed to devote the whole of his time and energy to propaganda work in the country in its support. The executive has decided upon two developments, from which great results are looked for. The party has already entered upon an elaborate scheme for the political organisation of women. This work is to be done in industrial constituencies through the Women's Trade Union League, the Women's Co-operative Guild, and other similar organisations, and women organisers are to be employed in those constituencies in organising and educating in labour politics the millions of women who will be added to the electoral roll under the Representation of the People Bill. The executive of the Labour party looks for a big accession of Parliamentary strength from the women's vote, which in the electoral sense is an unknown quantity. They are not going to leave anything to chance so far as the new voters are concerned.

One member at least of this special committee is a man who has been egregiously discourteous to suffragists at Labour election contests in days gone by. Now he will bend his wits to the task of seeing what use he can make of them. We trust that women voters will not justify the speculation, but will retain independence of thought and action, seeing that the most cursory inspection of the political world as it is now must reveal that men have only one thing to teach women in politics—how *not* to do things, and what methods *not* to choose.

C. NINA BOYLE, Political Organiser.

THE CAMPAIGN OF CALUMNY.

In 1916, when the uproar about the debauchery of women because of the war was recrudescent, the accompaniment to that canting campaign was this item from the courts in various parts of the country:

A pair of white gloves was presented at Reading Quarter Sessions, there being no cases. There was not a single charge or a summons

for disposal at the Stratford Court yesterday, despite the fact that the court embraces the districts of Barking, Ilford, Leyton, Walthamstow, and Wanstead, and the Epping Forest.

Of that we wrote at the time:—

"Reading is an industrial centre, employing large numbers of women and girls at low wages. Bark-

ing, Leyton, Walthamstow, and Ilford are densely crowded areas. There has been no exodus from these places of half a million or so of women. The women who belong to them are all there; it is the men who have gone. And the result is, white gloves at the Sessions and empty police-courts. One would think that these pregnant facts would silence for very shame the slanderers of British women, who love to present a national picture of weak and dissolute wives breaking down under their temptations and their vices in the absence of the Strong Silent Men whose moral support alone kept the womanhood of the nation from evil practices and wholesale demoralisation. A disgraceful effort has lately been made by the Police-court Mission to raise funds by specious appeals based on "The soldier's home," and the drunken wife, and the return of the high-souled stricken hero to a desolate drink-ridden hearth. The Police-court Mission does splendid work, and deserves support, but it should be made to apologise abjectly for the manner of its appeal. Women are, always have been, and always will be, the small minority among law-breakers and criminals; and the greater the responsibility thrust on them in the absence of the more turbulent male, the smaller the proportion of women criminals becomes."

In 1917, a fresh campaign of calumny—they have cropped up like hardy perennials all through the war—broke out in Hartlepool, where licensed victuallers banded themselves together to refuse to serve women on licensed premises, contrary to the terms of their licenses and the law of the land, by the advice of the Chief Constable; and the local Trades Council, in a spirit of the most unctuous rectitude, upheld the action and described the drinking of women as a "scourge to the town." The accompaniment to this was equally and comically emphatic—the publication in the Press of these eloquent figures:—

A remarkable reduction in the convictions for drunkenness in the scheduled areas in Great Britain is shown in the return just issued by the Board of Control presided over by Lord D'Abernon. In the year before the war and since then the convictions in England and Wales, with weekly averages, have been as follows:—

Year.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Wky. Av.
1913	146,526	35,030	181,556	3,482
1914	140,138	36,533	176,671	3,388
1915	98,706	32,533	131,239	2,517
1916	60,039	20,720	80,759	1,544
1917 (to Aug. 12)	—	—	—	929

The matter is made still more disgraceful by the fact that, in communications held with the Central Control Board of the Liquor Traffic, the Women's Freedom League was informed that the reason for the agreement was *not* the bad behaviour of women, but the fact that there was "not enough beer to go round," and that it was wanted for the men in certain specific trades! Thus the "scourge" resolved itself into a shortage of beer for men; and any peg is good enough upon which to hang abuse and slander of women. Miss Dorothy Evans has carried out a protest in the best spirit of the Women's Freedom League, and her interesting account of her experiences, published on page 3, is well worth study, as showing how easy it is to inflict injustice on voteless women.

The Despard Arms, 123, Hampstead-road, N.W. 3.

The cold snap has made fires a welcome addition to our rooms. Who will help to keep us warm by presenting us with a ton of coal? The sooner the quicker, as the Irishman says! We are very glad to welcome Freedom Leaguers on a visit to London; one is with us now, and we usually have beds available for chance requirements; 2s. 6d. bed and breakfast. We can accommodate friends willing to share a room, or husband and wife.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.



DARE TO BE FREE.

LONDON AND SUBURBS

Friday, October 12.—Croydon Public Meeting, at 32A, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Nina Boyle. Subject: "What is Reconstruction?"

Saturday, October 13.—Kensington Branch "At Home" to Miss Nina Boyle, at 94, Cambridge-gardens, N. Kensington, 3.30 p.m. Music, tea, and talk.

Wednesday, October 17.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3.30 p.m. Speakers: The

Rev. W. C. Roberts (Rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury), on "Indian Education," and Miss Nina Boyle. Chairman: Miss Eunice Murray. Admission Free. Tea can be obtained in the Café after the meeting at 6d. Mid-London Branch Meeting, Women's Freedom League Office, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6.30 p.m.

Friday, October 19.—Political Rally, Caxton Hall, 6.30 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Miss Boyle, Miss Eunice Murray and Miss Dorothy Evans. Admission free.

Wednesday, October 24.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3.30 p.m. Speakers: Miss Evelyn Sharp and Mrs. Despard. Chairman: Miss Nina Boyle.

Wednesday, October 31.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3.30 p.m. Speakers: Miss Abadam, on "The Feminist Revision of Theological Values," and Miss Boyle.

Friday, November 9.—Croydon Public Meeting, 32A, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans, on "How Men Mind the Baby."

Sunday, November 18.—Discussion Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Miss Rebecca West on "The Real Sources of the Inequality of the Sexes." Tea 4.15 to 5 p.m. Lecture 5 p.m., admission by ticket only, prices 2s. 6d. and 1s., from W.F.L., 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Friday, November 30, and Saturday, December 1.—Green, White and Gold Fair, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 3 p.m.—9 p.m. To be opened on first day by Miss Lillah McCarthy—on second day by Miss Eva Moore.

PROVINCES.

Monday, October 15.—Middlesbrough, Suffrage Centre, 231A, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road. Branch Meeting, 8 p.m. Speaker: Miss Eunice Murray.

Wednesday, October 17.—Middlesbrough, Suffrage Centre, Democratic Club, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, October 24.—Portsmouth, Work Party, 14, Festing-grove, 3 p.m.

SCOTLAND.

Saturday, October 13.—Edinburgh, "At Home," 13, South Charlotte-street, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Despard.

Friday, November 9.—Glasgow, Concert, Central Halls, Bath-street.

We draw special attention to

Wednesday, October 17.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3.30 p.m. Speakers: The Rev. W. C. Roberts (Rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury), on "Indian Education," and Miss Nina Boyle. Chairman: Miss Eunice Murray.

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OTHER SOCIETIES.

Nine Elms Women's Club, 2, Currie-street, Nine Elms, S.W., 2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 16.—Miss Eunice Murray.

U.S. Club, 92, Borough-road, S.E., 8 p.m.

Tuesday, October 16.—Miss Nina Boyle, on "Eight Months' Work for our Serbian Allies."

British Dominions Women's Suffrage Union.—Saturday, October 27.—"Indian Tea," at Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3.30 p.m. Mrs. N. C. Sen, on "The Education of Indian Women."

THEY SUPPORT US!

THE CASE OF MISS DAVISON.

It will not be forgotten that Miss Evans and Miss Clark, in their recent North-East Coast Campaign, received great assistance from Miss Davison, who rendered valuable service in collecting and selling THE VOTE. On her return to Newcastle, she was arrested while selling and collecting for the Birthday Fund, and was charged with contravening the Defence of the Realm regulations about street collections! Released, pending inquiries, on her own recognisances, Miss Davison communicated with headquarters, as also did the police; and full responsibility was taken for her action by the officials of the League. The case came on last week, too late for an account to appear in THE VOTE. Miss Dorothy Evans, assisted by Mrs. Metge, made the affair a peg upon which to hang a fresh campaign on behalf of the People's Bill, and to rally local suffragists, who responded splendidly. She sends us the following account:—

There was an electric feeling in the Central Police-court, Newcastle, this morning, when group after group of women began to arrive. Diverse as these women were in occupation and way of life, arriving on foot or in their motors, from the schools, shops or hospitals, they were united in the Women's Cause. As such public interest was shown in influential quarters in Miss Davison's case, it was brought on considerably earlier than had been intended.

Directly the case was called Miss Dorothy Evans rose and said: "I wish to make an application to be allowed to appear in Miss Davison's defence. There are as yet no women solicitors, but I ask you, sir, to give me standing in this court to defend her. She is quite unversed in the proceedings of police-courts, and wishes a woman to defend her." The Magistrate, very courteously and with a beaming smile, said "I cannot yet." During the opening of the case against Miss Davison a conciliatory tone was noticeable; it was stated that the authorities were convinced that she was authorised by the League to collect, the lack of permit being emphasised as merely an error. Soon after Miss Davison began her statement the Magistrate broke in, evidently very anxious that she should not call witnesses and make it a long affair. He dismissed the case at once. A policeman then returned her collecting-box to Miss Davison with an elaborate air. As soon as the case was over about half the public left the court, and many people made a point of congratulating Miss Davison.

The defence prepared for Miss Davison by the Political and Militant Department was that the Birthday Fund is neither a war fund nor a charitable one and has been an institution in the League for a number of years; and that the work of the League has been carried on by this method, without let or hindrance, and without special permits, all over the United Kingdom throughout the war.

Miss Davison Defence Fund.—Miss Ellis, 1s.; Mrs. Metge, 1s.; Miss Bell, 1s.; Miss Haby, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Blanch, 1s.; Mrs. Atkinson, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Haggie, 10s.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE PROTEST AT HARTLEPOOL.

We have received the following from Hartlepool, and are glad to know that it appeared in the local papers:—

Members of the Women's Freedom League—Mrs. Harrison, Miss Ellis, and Miss Evans—called upon the Chief Constable of Hartlepool, on October 5, to inquire on what authority the licensed victuallers of that town refused to serve any women. They were told that it was by agreement among the publicans themselves. Miss Evans questioned the legality of the proceeding, and claimed that women were by far the soberer sex, the cases of men drunkards being seven times as numerous as women. This restriction, she said, was a slur on women.

Mr. Bladon, of the Police-court Mission, was also present. He admitted the restriction to be unjust in principle, but it was for the protection of women, just as a parent might put a guard round the fire to protect the children. The suffragists protested against women being treated as children. "They would never tolerate being penalised on account of a few drunkards. Women meant to stand up for themselves," they asserted. The women then visited a number of public-houses in Hartlepool. In all cases alcoholic

drinks were refused. In all but two instances lemonade was also refused. Everywhere publicans agreed that the restriction was unnecessary, that drinking among women was very small, and that it was insulting to respectable women, often strangers to the town, coming in with their husbands, to be refused refreshment. Furthermore, they said that they had no doubt that it would lead to secret drinking—a far worse evil.

The legality of refusing women was generally doubted. An amount of evidence of this refusal has been collected, by-standers eagerly offering to witness to the occurrence. On leaving each hotel a legend was set out on the pavement in chalk, "Public traders must serve all the public, even the women," or "Seven men get drunk to every one woman," "Women protest against being regarded as drunkards." The men in the bars all agreed that such a restriction on men would not be tolerated for a moment, and that their members of Parliament would protect their interests. Women's rights, as part of the public, can, say the suffragists, be encroached upon with impunity as long as they are unrepresented politically.

WIVES AND INCOME-TAX.

For cool assurance and effrontery we commend Mr. Bonar Law's suggested remedy in the matter of income-tax to our readers. We wonder what kind of minds these people can be equipped with, and read with amazement in the daily Press that "it is the simplest plan yet devised, and will confer a solid benefit upon the working man." The working woman, if she happen to be a wife, is by this precious arrangement, to confer this benefit on the working man by being "reckoned as a child of his." And this fresh insult, because it will give to men alone taxable abatement to the amount of £25, is actually hailed with delight by organised labour. If this does not open the eyes of many women who hope to find political salvation in the labour ranks, nothing ever will.

"The principle's the thing," chortles *The Daily News*, which looks on the arrangement as in effect a tax on bachelors. The principle in this case is a shockingly bad thing, and a protest will be lodged at once by the Women's Freedom League, in which we trust all suffragists will be united. We hold that no man is entitled to monetary consideration because he has a wife, unless a woman be also entitled to monetary consideration because she has a husband. And if this peculiar form of sex favouritism be allowed to go through, we shall demand that marriage be the thing to be rewarded, not the possession of a wife; and that instead of treating one of the partners in marriage as a child—i.e., one of the results of the partnership—that both partners should be equally rewarded, and that half the abatement should go to the wife.

It seems so very easy for alterations in the income-tax arrangements to be made for the convenience of enfranchised man, yet we remember the long unavailing struggle carried on to get an alteration in favour of women, and to have the Inland Revenue brought into line with the Married Women's Property Acts. Mr. Lloyd George told women during that agitation, that he could not afford to lose for the revenue what would be returned to their pockets if that simple act of justice were performed. Yet the country needs money far more now than it did then; though Mr. Bonar Law is prepared to make a far bigger sacrifice! The beneficiaries are enfranchised men, his masters as well as his taxpayers; that makes all the difference. C. N. B.

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SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 8.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, October 12th, 1917.

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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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AGENTS.

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FACE THE FACTS.

A warning note was struck last Sunday by Mr. W. L. George in his address to the Women's Freedom League; and it is one that needed striking. It was to the effect that women should not let themselves be carried away by the over-fervid praise that is being showered on them just now. They will still find the "anti" in their path, even when enfranchisement comes; they will find sex antagonism, trade jealousy, and other obstacles still encumbering the road, in spite of the new hearts and new minds that the war is supposed to have engendered. Beyond doubt it will be so. Beyond doubt there will be many an outcry against the entry, and the remaining in, of women in many directions. There will be angry revolt against many a reform introduced in obedience to the women's demand. There will be a tremendous rallying of vested interests, an arraying of masculine organisation, an entrenching of the fortified positions now in occupation. Possession is nine points of the law; and those in possession will not let themselves be dislodged from ancient strongholds without a struggle. And while political parties will make big bids for the women's custom, many of the more powerful protagonists will fight, outside political lines, in the ways and by the methods with which we are already familiar.

Detraction will be a useful weapon. Anything that will discourage the influential from trusting women, individually or in the mass, with heavy moral or material responsibility, will be resorted to by the Antis. We have seen how the unscrupulous campaign of calumny is kept alive even when the urgent need for women's work is muzzling many mouths. When the immediate need is over, tongues will be loosened, and there will be no limit to the depreciation which will replace the present extravagant praise. This praise all too frequently comes from quarters which are in their very essence suspect. From the anti-suffrage Press; from our bitterest enemies; from empty-headed crowds in cinemas and variety halls who will shriek themselves hoarse with delight at the sight or the suggestion of women working in any and every way for the "heroes of the war"; but who will convert those shrieks into groans and hisses, at a moment's notice, if the women suggest that the work should be rewarded by political freedom. Praise from these quarters is but a poor compliment; so little do we esteem their opinion, we almost prefer their blame and their ill-will. The latter was, at any rate, an honest and a natural impulse! The sudden change

affects one unpleasantly. It has an artificial aspect and seems to lack sincerity.

Do not, therefore, let us be duped by our rather unreal popularity. Let us use it to brace ourselves and equip ourselves for the inevitable struggle to limit us to what men, enforced by reactionary women, consider our sphere. The war-cry will be "the welfare of the race"; we shall need tempered weapons and stout hearts to repel fresh attacks.

There is a tendency to hold over women the vague threat of "what men will expect of them" when the war is over, and they return from their various soul-searching experiences. These experiences have, in an overwhelming number of times, been terrible; and it must give all who endured to the end an idea that a great deal was asked of them, and that to be equal to the demand was no small thing. There is much to make men in the bulk think a great deal of themselves and their capacity—a point of view they were never backward in taking! Nor do we grudge them the kudos to which their heroism and endurance entitle them; women, indeed, are generally the first to pay this kind of tribute to courage and grit. What we want to point out is this, that these men have had the great advantage of this change, this break from the commonplace into sheer heroism, this learning of fresh values, this violent readjustment of ideals. For good or ill, they have had these experiences. Dearly they have paid for them, bitterly the cost has been wrung; but the result is there. And now it seems to us that the great point will be, not what the men who have had the change expect of the women who have not; but what the women who had to stay at home will expect of the men who have had unfathomable opportunities of searching their hearts and souls for the real meaning of life.

There is a comic and material side to this, as well as a serious one. The men of the Navy and Army have received a great deal of petting at the hands of the women of society. From the most educated and refined to the coarsest and lowest they have been waited on, sung to, talked to, nursed, and entertained by the women of the leisured classes, in camps, hospitals, clubs, and restaurants. Whatever of a refining influence smart society can bring has been at their disposal; with the additional stimulus of getting it from the opposite sex. Not so their wives and mothers, sisters and daughters! For them, as in pre-war days, except for the patronising ladies in the women's clubs, there has been only the maternity visitor, the Care Committee lady, the representative of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association. They have not been waited on by the élite of society in clubs with smart little tables where nice meals at a minimum cost can be had at any time. They have not been chatted to by members of the House of Lords; Gilbert the Filbert has not sung them his songs or recited them his pieces; they have not been corresponded with by the male aristocracy and gentry; the members of the House of Commons have not offered to be their "war godfathers." They have, in fact, been left severely in the various "spheres" to which they belong; while their men-folk have been jolted, snatched, and petted out of theirs. The crucial point will be, what are the women going to expect of their men after all this vast effort to care for them; what are they going to expect as the result of all the refining influences brought to bear? We suggest, as a way of equalising matters, that Lord Curzon or Lord Milner should at once start a campaign to put things on a sounder basis, and to accustom the women at home to the same class of society and entertainment as their men-folk have been receiving abroad. Or, alternatively, that people leave off talking only about what the men are going to expect, and to recognise as of equal importance that the women are going to expect something also.

C. NINA BOYLE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS REFORM: Mr Herbert Samuel as Candid Critic.

The question of the reform of the House of Lords being at the moment before a specially appointed committee of both Houses of Parliament, it was particularly interesting to hear a well-known Member of the House of Commons and an ex-Minister, Mr. Herbert Samuel, play the part of candid critic on the need for reform in the House of Commons. Judging by his informing lecture on October 4, given at the School of Economics (London University), of which he is a governor, Mr. Samuel finds that the House of which he is a Member must undergo drastic changes in many ways if it is to play its part worthily in the British constitution. Readers of THE VOTE will hear with satisfaction that Mr. Samuel now frankly recognises and welcomes the coming of women into the service of the State, not only as voters but as Members of Parliament. With regard to the congested business of the House, he declared that under present procedure there was no time to deal with questions ripe for and demanding immediate solution—as women have long ago discovered—and that to relieve this paralysing congestion it was not a question of conforming to Irish, Scotch, or Welsh sentiment by offering Home Rule, but a sheer necessity to implore Ireland, Scotland, and Wales to take away their local business, for the House of Commons could not possibly cope with it!

Re-establish Control.

The Parliament Act, Mr. Samuel pointed out, largely increased the constitutional power of the House of Commons; it established its financial control and abolished the veto of the House of Lords. Yet before the war it was evident that the effective power of the House was diminishing through surrender to the Cabinet. Mr. Samuel would not agree that the House had surrendered all its power; he maintained that the questioning of Ministers is still an effective weapon, though cheapened by the extensive, and sometimes frivolous, use to which it is put; but it is a searchlight on a Minister of the Crown and his work as well as on an obscure Civil Servant. The chief cause of the diminishing power of the House was the growth of the Convention of regarding every proposal brought forward by the Government as one of confidence. If the House registered an adverse verdict it meant the fall of the Government, a general election and, quite possibly, sending Members themselves into the wilderness. Sixty years ago the Government frequently accepted defeat on matters of detail and continued in office, amending its proposals in accordance with the wishes of the House. The present habit is seriously harmful. When Members now go into the division lobby, it is not a question whether a proposal is good or bad but whether or not they shall defeat the Government.

Greater Freedom to Attract Suitable Men and Women Candidates.

As candid critic, Mr. Samuel urged the abolition of this cramping custom. On points of detail there should be no question of the resignation of the Government if defeated. He pointed to the excellent effect of the open debate and free vote of the House in the recent instances of Woman Suffrage and Proportional Representation. The debates immediately became more interesting and more real because Members spoke and voted according to conviction, not according to the bidding of Whips. Greater freedom and more independence of action are essential, he insisted, if men and women of character and ability and good-will are to be attracted to stand as Members of Parliament.

Too Amenable on Labour Unrest.

In reply to the criticism that the House now

tamely accepted whatever the Government proposed, Mr. Samuel declared that the Government generally proposed what the House could accept, but on the question of Labour unrest, he admitted that it had been too amenable to the Government. The causes of the unrest ought to have been voiced inside the House, not by strikes outside. The power of the House is certainly weakened by the fact that sixty of its members hold posts in the Government, also by the absence of Members on active service.

After the War Reforms.

The exceptional powers granted to the executive must end with the ending of the war. The Defence of the Realm Act and its progeny of Orders and Regulations must go; if any part remains it will have to be by special legislation. Mr. Samuel discussed at some length the French plan of Parliamentary committees, but gave his verdict against the introduction of such a plan at Westminster. Ministers even now, he said, have very little time to think and plan; if they had constantly to attend such committees they would have still less.

In his proposals for greater and more effective control by the House of Commons he maintained that in foreign policy, no treaty for war should be valid unless it had been submitted to and discussed by Parliament, though the preliminaries must be secret. In finance, there must be control of the estimates, not simply of expenditure as is the case at present through the Controller and Auditor General, who are officers of the House, not of the Government. He strongly favoured open debate and voting on proposals according to conviction, not simply out of consideration for the continuance or extinction of the Government. He welcomed the advent of the Labour Members in extending the representative character of the House; this character will be still more extended by the Representation of the People Bill. In emphasising the need for quality in representation, Mr. Samuel repeated his claim for the greater independence of members in order to attract the right men and women.

Great changes must come in procedure; the nation, eager for early solution of the problems of reconstruction, will become impatient if only a few measures trickle through. Between 1907 and 1911 458 Public Acts were passed, but only 252 applied to the United Kingdom and Ireland; the rest were simply of local interest. A single Parliament cannot cope with all legislation; the relief must come by devolution to new legislative bodies as in the United States, Canada and other countries. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales must take their local affairs away from Westminster. Nor can the House of Commons deal with Labour problems, added Mr. Samuel; it is neither well enough informed as to changing conditions nor nimble enough to deal with them. He supported the recommendations of the Whitley Report to establish national industrial councils. The war, he observed, is a war for liberty, and the liberty centred in the House of Commons must not only be maintained but increased.

The Principal of the School of Economics, Mr. Pember Reeves, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Samuel, pointed out that the value of questioning Ministers was diminished because of the audacious evasiveness of the replies, and declared that the House of Commons was too large to be a true, deliberate assembly; it was simply a public meeting in which general discussion meant the blocking of business. Mr. J. H. Whitley, Chairman of Committees in the House, presided at the lecture, and declared that the great question was how the House of Commons could maintain its ancient traditions and yet deal with the pressing problems awaiting solution.

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN WORKERS: ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The annual conference of the National Union of Women Workers was held this year under most unfavourable conditions. Air-raids were in full swing, and the programme had to be drastically altered at the last minute, completely upsetting the arrangements of many delegates (myself among the number). In spite of the exceptional circumstances, however, the conference was well attended, the hall of the Y.M.C.A., Tottenham Court-road, being quite full. What struck me most forcibly was the great change in the attitude of the conference towards the suffrage question. When I first attended as the Women's Freedom League delegate five years ago one could only mention Woman Suffrage in fear and trembling, and with bated breath. This year Dr. Ogilvie Gordon, in her very fine presidential address, boldly proclaimed her joy and triumph in the imminent enfranchisement of six millions of women, and the first resolution on the agenda dealt with special work on the women's vote. Wednesday was mainly occupied with amendments to the constitution. One, of special interest to the Women's Freedom League, gives direct representation on the executive committee to the affiliated societies. In this connection I noticed a real desire to make the National Union of Women Workers a representative body to watch, safeguard, and advance women's interests. It was deplored by several speakers that the labour women did not enter more largely into its composition. A resolution was passed urging the Government to establish a Ministry of Health in the administration of which women should be given their full share. Lady Frances Balfour's suggestion that we should ask for a woman Minister of Health was greeted with enthusiasm and applause, but was not put to the vote. A rider was added advising the transfer of Poor Law Infirmaries from the Guardians to the Ministry of Health.

It was unfortunate that a most important resolution dealing with laws *re* solicitation was taken just before the lunch interval on Thursday, when many delegates had left the hall. Mrs. Allan Bright and Miss Chrystal M'Millan, as mover and seconder, made very fine speeches. Mrs. Vulliamy, of Cambridge, very ably supported, and added a protest against such an important matter being taken when it could not be properly discussed. She suggested postponing it till the first business on Friday morning. The chairman declined to do this, and cries of "Vote, vote," being raised in the hall, the resolution was put after very little discussion. It was, unfortunately, quite impossible for me to attend on Friday morning, which I regretted the more as a resolution was adjourned till then dealing with illegitimate and adopted children which I wished to amend in accordance with the Women's Freedom League point of view. In spite of these disappointments it was a most interesting conference, and left the impression that the National Union of Women Workers earnestly wishes to extend its usefulness and to become still more a living force among women of varying shades of opinion, religious, political and social.

KATHLEEN TANNER.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

On October 3 we had the pleasure of welcoming our old friends, Mrs. Nevinson and Miss Katherine Raleigh. Mrs. Nourse, another old friend, was in the chair, and emphasized the need for reform in the education of girls, urging that they should be prepared to fulfil the responsibilities which would be conferred upon them by the vote.

Mrs. Nevinson spoke of the outlook with regard to the passing of the Representation of the People Bill and the victory for woman suffrage. Women, she

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said, have suffered so many disappointments that they know only too well the dangers of delay. They stand with doubting Thomas. She dealt with possibilities of delay by the House of Lords, but considered the greatest danger of all was a sudden dissolution, caused possibly by war-weariness, to which the recent air raids certainly contributed. She characterised the present Government as a Tyranny of Five under Lord Northcliffe. Its position was insecure, but she trusted it would remain in office until the Bill became law. If the Bill were held up until the House of Lords had been reconstructed there would doubtless be a delay of several generations! On the other hand there were indications pointing to success. The present parliamentary register was "not only stale but putrid," and if a new election were to be taken under it, who would the new Parliament represent, with the women left out and the men under 41 in France? The Labour Party had insisted in their recent conference that the whole Bill must be passed. They had received from the Prime Minister an emphatic statement that it should not be shelved. With 10,000 women required for Women Army Auxiliary Corps, with women doing transport work in France, driving motors for the Army Service Corps, the Flying Corps, etc., it can no longer be urged that the only place for women is the home. She recalled the agitation against the harem skirt (a premature agitation since the harem skirt never established itself in England) not so very long before the war. Two women were set upon and injured in Hyde Park; their two male assailants, being brought to justice, excused themselves by saying that they thought the women were wearing harem skirts. Now it is no uncommon sight to see women in uniform and in trousers, and no protest is made. Miss McAdam's election by the votes of fighting men and nurses as a member of the Alberta Parliament was a good omen. It seemed as if the woman Member of Parliament had come as quietly as the trousers.

Miss Raleigh rejoiced to know that initiative was not dead. In all ages there had been men and women who were not content to follow the traditions laid down for them. In a spirit of analysis, Ibsen and Bernard Shaw had tried to show society what it lacked, and had thrown the light into dark corners. In 1839 the Custody of Infants Act was passed, owing to the initiative of Mrs. Norton, who studied her husband's law books, and whose unhappy married life resulted in the casting of light into the dark corners of the law. The Divorce Act of 1857 was due to the initiative of a judge. She said the contemporary Press could not be accused of throwing light into dark corners, but that to this generalisation the suffrage Press was a brilliant exception. She urged women to subscribe regularly to a suffrage paper, to read it carefully, and she made a strong recommendation in favour of THE VOTE, to the value of which she paid a generous tribute.

W. L. George on the Outlook for Women

"Will the Position of Married Women be Enhanced or Diminished by the War," was the subject of Mr. W. L. George's lecture at the Minerva Cafe, last Sunday afternoon, and he declared at the outset that, in his opinion, there would be little difference in the effect of the war as between married and single women. The position of women would be enhanced, but he added a strong warning against undue optimism in this respect. Men had found it difficult to be without women; there was work to be done and no men to do it; so they had to put up with women. They had discovered, however, that women could use tools hitherto deemed the sole possession of men, and this had caused them to perform the acrobatic feat of questioning as to what was man's and what was woman's work. Women, too, are becoming familiar with a class of thought and experience, from which men had cut them off. One of the results of the war will be a shuffling of temperaments, which will give women a better chance. Things are going smoothly for women in industry now, but when the fighting men return to civil life it will be a different story. Good wages are essential

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POLITICAL FUND.

The return of our Political Organiser to "THE FRONT" and the reassembling of Parliament calls for the POLITICAL FUND. We must have more money for the BIG PUSH TO VICTORY which will change OUR BILL into OUR ACT and give us the VOTE.

The Political Rally is timed for October 19. Please send your contribution for the Fund before that date or bring it with you to the meeting, and the larger it is the more certain you will make the victory. E. KNIGHT.

for women; until women have more capital and a readiness to combine in using it, they are more likely to be employees than employers; but Mr. George thinks the future will be for the highly-paid employee. He had no hard words for the women of the working classes who have learned to spend money in luxuries, and insisted that the marvel was not that a few women drank, but that all did not do so, considering their surroundings and anxiety for the men at the front. The children are certainly better fed and clothed, and even the present deluge of cant with regard to them will work out, he thinks, in the extension of the endowment of motherhood, the feeding of school children, and factory reform. He hoped that women's votes will be cast as women's votes, and considers that they will be more aggressive and militant because women now know what it is to have money in their pockets. He still looks forward to women administering only the home; he does not wish to see married women in factories, but does not agree with closing factories against them. Things travel slowly, and the best friend of the world is time.

After a short discussion Miss Underwood, who presided, moved a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. George, which was carried with acclamation.

W.F.L. Public Meeting in Glasgow.

A highly successful public meeting was held on October 4, when the Central Hall was filled with members and friends who had gathered to give a splendid reception to our speakers—Mrs. Despard, Miss Eunice G. Murray, and Professor Nicholls (Boston, U.S.A.). Miss Belle H. McLelland presided and introduced the speakers in a neat little speech.

Miss Murray, who was in splendid form showed that the winning of the vote was a very small part of the work of our League, which demands equality for men and women, in work as well as politics. The vote was proposed to be given on unequal terms, therefore the Women's Freedom League was not satisfied. It was the young women workers of from 18 to 30 who had converted Mr. Asquith, and it was unjust that these young women who had worked so magnificently should not have the vote.

Professor Nicholls spoke strongly in favour of equal rights irrespective of sex, and told how the women of Boston are fighting for woman suffrage, also of an "anti" society there. He would like women both here and in America to have that good broomstick the vote, so that they might sweep clean the halls of legislation.

Mrs. Despard, who was accorded a rousing reception, expressed her great satisfaction at the splendid work of the Scottish Branches, and of the way in which we had kept the suffrage flag flying despite the many interests and anxieties the war had brought. She spoke at length on woman's influence for peace, and aroused special interest by her humane and sympathetic discourse. Mrs. Murray, of Cardross, moved votes of thanks to the speakers, and Miss McLelland announced the special concert for the League Funds to take place in the same Hall on November 9.

K. E.

Under the patronage of the Queen, a matinee will be given at the Shaftesbury Theatre, on Tuesday, October 16, at 2 p.m., by the London Stage, in aid of "The Old Vic" Appeal Fund, to meet the cost of structural alterations, about £7,000, required by the London County Council. Among those who will take part are Ellen Terry, Mary Anderson, Lillian Braithwaite, Gertrude Elliott, Lilah MacCarthy, Madge Titheradge, H. B. Irving, Acton Bond, Matheson Lang, Ben Webster, Ben Greet, and the Vic Company. Seats from £5 5s. to 2s. Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson is chairman of the Appeal Committee, Sir Sidney Lee and Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton are members, and Frederick Whelen hon. secretary.

SEE OUR SALE AND

GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD FAIR.

Now that the holidays are over we hope that all members are working for the annual Fair, which is arranged for November 30 and December 1. The fate of our Bill still hangs in the balance, and we must therefore make every possible effort to keep the treasury filled. We look to the Fair to furnish a good sum with which to carry on, but this can only be provided if all members help. There was a ready sale for useful articles last year, and we hope to receive a larger number this year. The following stalls have been arranged for up to date:—General, Handkerchief, Home-made Provisions, Toy, White, Literature, THE VOTE (in memory of Mrs. Snow). The "Violet Clark" Quartette, which was so much appreciated last November, has again been engaged. Please look in THE VOTE for further details from time to time.

BRANCH NOTES.

Newcastle.

The triumphant issue of Miss Davison's case was almost entirely due to the splendid rally of supporters to the court. The authorities now realise that suffragists are not scattered, but ready as ever to unite in the defence of one of their number. We have hopes of a promising Branch in Newcastle, and a meeting is to be held for the formation of it on October 12. Mrs. Anderton has kindly consented to act as secretary *pro tem.*, and she will give members and friends full particulars. Her address is 129, Sandringham-road, South Gosforth. Mrs. Blanche will be in the chair. Officers and a committee are to be elected. Action in connection with the political situation will be considered, and future plans arranged. It is hoped that a Drawing-room Meeting for Mrs. Despard will be held on October 16. Details of this will be announced at the meeting. Our chances of success this session depend almost entirely upon the amount of pressure brought from the constituencies, and Newcastle suffragists do not intend to let their Members of Parliament forget that now is the time to secure their enfranchisement.

Portsmouth.

The annual members' meeting was held on October 2, at the Suffrage Rooms. The hon. secretary read the report of the year's work from September, 1916—1917, which included monthly members' meetings, fortnightly sewing meetings, three public meetings, one drawing-room meeting, and one social evening. To raise funds, five whist drives were held and a jumble sale. £6 was sent to Headquarters, and a large parcel of useful articles to the Christmas Fair. The treasurer's report was very satisfactory, showing a balance in hand of a little over £2. Mrs. Whetton and Mrs. Speck were re-elected hon. secretary and hon. treasurer respectively. The treasurer will be pleased to receive the annual subscriptions of members who were not at the meeting. Members are urged to attend the work-party, as £5 worth of goods has been promised for the Christmas Fair. The next will be at 14, Festing-grove, on Wednesday, October 24, at 3 p.m., by kind invitation of Mrs. Slatter.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 93, Nine Elms-Lane, S.W. 8. Hon. Sec. and Organiser: Miss Kathleen Holmes.

Last Saturday we awoke to find ourselves famous, our dinner-hour being enlivened by the visits of three Press photographers in quick succession. All seemed to think they could make a "good story" out of penny dinners, and the notice which appeared in *The Evening News* last Friday has already brought us a contribution of 2s. 6d. from two children. Other gifts gratefully acknowledged are: Miss Baker, a garden syringe; Mrs. Thomas, child's shoes; Mr. E. E. Pearce, apples; Mrs. Delbanco, a porridge plate, and Mrs. Maddick, 2s. to buy a frock, both for our baby. For the same important person we urgently need a high nursery guard for the fireplace, and a clothes-horse to air his garments. We hope some of our kind friends may be able to provide these before the winter sets in in earnest.

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EXCHANGE, PAGE 8

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THE VOTE

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MISS A. MAUDE ROYDEN will
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