

WOMEN CITIZENS.

A meeting of members of the National Council of Women and others was held on Friday, June 29th, at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, to consider a Draft Programme to bring before women the new powers and responsibilities granted by the extension of the franchise to women under the "Representation of the People" Bill.

Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon was in the chair.

She said that Women's Suffrage would probably become law in the late autumn. Their next Council Meeting would have an entirely new significance.

The proposals would include the greater representation of affiliated societies on the Council. If it were more thoroughly representative it would be a more lively force.

The propaganda work that would be proposed would be not only for the enfranchised women, but for the whole of the women of the country. For the suffrage would not end where it was to begin—it was only on its way.

It was hoped that the affiliated Societies would unite in the work, and every part of the country ought to be provided with branch secretaries. The woman's vote should be carried out in a non-party spirit, and the national aim kept well before them.

Mrs. Creighton said she had never been absolutely satisfied with the title of the Union, and she proposed that in future it should be called the National Union of Women Citizens.

Mrs. Fawcett urged the Union to resist party spirit. More co-operation was needed from the Women's Societies and more representation on the Executive of affiliated societies. She hoped that the Union would seek to include the representative Societies of Working Women.

Though they must feel very happy and triumphant, their object was not yet accomplished, though it was obvious that they could not immediately begin agitation. It was to be feared that the younger industrial women in their unenfranchised state will not have as large a measure of freedom as their sisters. The enfranchised women must consider themselves trustees for the younger women, and must see that they were not ousted from their industrial freedom.

"At great price obtained I this freedom."

Mrs. Allen Bright said women should start their franchise free, and not throttled with party machinery. Principles were of more importance than party, and the greatest good of the greatest number should be sought. The Housing of the Poor, Infant Mortality, Temperance, Health, should occupy their attention.

The vote was a great responsibility and it should be accepted with not a little fear, and with great reverence.

Lady Frances Balfour said she considered it extremely doubtful that the franchise would be here in October. Peers and Peeresses were kittle-cattle. There would be a severe fight in the House of

Lords, and the whole Bill might be rejected. But one thing was certain—women would never again be left out of any Franchise Bill.

In the discussion which followed,

Dr. Marion Phillips, who represented the working women, said they were not affiliated and she did not think it likely they ever would be. She objected to the suggestion in the programme that the vote was a reward. It was their due as women. She was disappointed in the draft programme. Every working woman was thinking about peace. There was no word as to it. Nor was there any word in it of work that was harmful to women, or wages, or decent conditions.

She wished it had represented the point of view of the working woman. Their nightmares were—milk shortage, rising prices, food, clothes, troubles about their absent ones. It must be realised that the great mass of the community is the community.

Another speaker representing the Adult Schools, expressed her disappointment that there was no practical suggestion as to the education of the mother in the home, usually a keen working woman to whom her new power would be just a menace.

Miss H. Hawkins, P.L.G., said that there were a number of nurses' Societies affiliated to the National Council, and among their members would be a large number of enfranchised women. Some of them felt that as they were not represented on the Executive Committee of the Union their professional affairs were not dealt with to the full benefit of the members.

In future they would desire direct representation as they were by no means satisfied with the way their interests had been ignored during the past year, especially with regard to the College of Nursing, Ltd., which was really a company of laymen, endeavouring to prevent the professional enfranchisement of trained nurses.

She hoped the Union would consider the matter.

As the Draft before the meeting was not altogether acceptable, especially to those who spoke for industrial workers, it was decided to discuss it further at a future meeting.

THE REMOVAL OF THE GRILLE.

A Supplementary Estimate for £5 has just been issued "for the removal of the grille in the Ladies' Gallery at the House of Commons." On this estimate the House will shortly decide by a free vote whether the grille shall be retained or abolished.

As we are at war with Turkey, let us hope their customs will at last be abandoned by our legislators.

TRUE TALE.

An applicant for Poor Law relief was instructed that as his plea was ill-health, he must first attend the hospital to obtain a diagnosis. "No I don't," he replied. "I've 'eard as many 'as died of that disease!"

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