

**Women members and witnesses on British Government *ad hoc*  
Committees of Inquiry 1850-1930, with special reference to  
Royal Commissions of Inquiry**

**Elaine Harrison**

**London School of Economics and Political Science**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**1998**

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### **Abstract**

The thesis describes the participation of women as witnesses and members of British government committees of inquiry during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines this participation both from the point of view of the women concerned and of the administrations which appointed them. It seeks to establish that such committee work was a form of political activity for individual women; and, by indicating the extent of the organisations and networks which linked these and similar women, demonstrates the existence of a small group of women working within the political elite who collaborated in the shaping of certain aspects of public policy during this time.

The thesis also considers the institutional implications of women's membership of committees by examining governmental and civil service attitudes to their appointments. It attempts to uncover how and why women were chosen, and argues that women's committee participation was instrumental in the formation of ideas about women's political work. In committees women became established as an interest group to be represented in the same way and in much the same proportions as other class or professional groupings. They thus achieved representation through interest rather than through equity, which contributed to enduring precedents for their subsequent political roles after they were granted the franchise.

I examine the work of women on committees as the committee form itself evolved to incorporate them and other groups from within and outside the elite social classes, providing a means by which the political nation could expand through slight changes in existing forms. Appointment to an advisory committee is not commonly seen as political representation, but during the proliferation of such committees through the nineteenth century, it offered a means of participation in political life for some of those denied direct representation through the franchise.

In Britain women began to be appointed to such committees some thirty years before they were granted a limited franchise in 1918. Through the committee form women were offered a representative voice in a growing but clearly delimited range of issues that were deemed to concern them, broadly within education, social welfare, and employment. However, their achievements were limited both by their confinement to such issues, and by



their consistently low numbers on committees. The thesis concludes that women's committee participation was fixed at almost the same time as it began, and that the period of women's most decisive involvement with this form was during the years between about 1908 and the early 1920s.

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## Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge permission to consult and quote from the manuscript collections listed in the bibliography, and thank the archivists, librarians and staffs of the various institutions in which those collections are held. I have also used material held at the following libraries and record offices, and thank their staffs for their help: the British Newspaper Library at Colindale, Camden Local Studies Centre, Exeter City Library, the Greater London Record Office, the House of Commons Library, the Institute of Historical Research, Manchester City Library, the National Register of Archives, Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Library, the North London Collegiate School, Sheffield City Library, Southwark Record Office, the University of Cambridge Library, the University of Exeter Library and the University of Newcastle Library.

I am grateful for information about their family members from the following: the Earl of Abinger, Mrs Dundas-Bekker, Mr Douglas Forrester-Paton, Mrs Zelda Hill, Mr John Mathew, Mr Theo Mathew, Professor Brian Simon and Mrs Joan Simon.

Parts of the thesis have been presented to seminars at the London School of Economics, the Institute of Historical Research and St. Hilda's College, Oxford. I thank the organisers and participants for their comments and advice.

I could not have undertaken the thesis without the financial support provided by the Crowther Fund of the Open University and the London School of Economics. The bulk of the research was funded by the Humanities Research Board of the British Academy, from whom I held a scholarship between October 1994 and June 1997.

I thank the following for their advice and assistance: Ms Jenny Campbell, Dr. Philip Corrigan, Professor Howard Glennerster, Miss Sarnia Harrison, Ms Branwen Jones and Ms Helen Kay.

I thank my supervisor, Professor Jane Lewis, for her consistently helpful guidance and advice.

## Introduction

The thesis describes the participation of women as witnesses and members of British Government committees of inquiry<sup>1</sup> during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines that participation both from the point of view of the women concerned and of the administrations which appointed them, using a combination of official records and private papers, as well as published diaries, biographies and political histories. It seeks to establish that such committee work was a form of political activity for individual women and was one of the means through which they could apply a practical morality. By indicating the extent of the organisations and networks which linked these and similar women, the thesis demonstrates the existence of a small group of women, working within the political elite, who collaborated in the shaping of certain aspects of public policy during this time. The thesis supports recent studies which highlight the work of women in the formation of state social welfare programmes. It also considers the institutional implications of women's membership of committees by examining governmental and civil service attitudes to their appointments. It attempts to uncover how and why women were chosen, and argues that women's committee participation was instrumental in the formation of ideas about women's political work. In committee work women quickly became established as an interest group to be represented in the same way and in much the same proportions as other class or professional groupings. They thus achieved representation through interest rather than through equity, and this contributed to enduring precedents for their subsequent political roles after they were granted the franchise.

Conventional political history tends to marginalise both of the objects of this thesis. Committees are considered an administrative rather than a political form and usually discussed in terms of outcomes, rarely within the parameters of high politics; while the history of women and politics is often reduced to women and political representation through the history of the suffrage movement. These two forms of concentration are further confined by academic disciplines so that for historians of politics, or women, or social policy, individual committees are usually only of interest in terms of their

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<sup>1</sup> I generally use the word 'committee' to refer collectively to all forms of inquiry; individual inquiries are identified as Royal Commission, Departmental Committee, Committee of Inquiry, and so on.

outcomes, while their more general features have been described by administrative or legal historians, and analysed by political or social scientists.

I examine the work of women on committees as the committee form itself evolved to incorporate them and other groups from within and outside the elite social classes, providing a means by which the political nation could expand through slight changes of existing forms. Appointment to an advisory committee is not commonly seen as political representation, but during the proliferation of such committees through the nineteenth century, it offered a means of participation in political life for some of those denied direct representation through the franchise. The longevity and endurance of the committee form in British government and administration gives it a unique and flexible position. Committees are used to advise, investigate and administer; they can act as mediators between opposing groups and between Government and citizens; and, less positively, can be used to block or defer Government action.

The difficulties in categorising and analysing the committee form lie in its comparative lack of formality, and in the huge range of committee types used as ruling or regulatory forms at the highest levels of the state.

Frederick Pollock [1909: 56] indicated the historical strength and continuing dominance of the form when he described the King's Council and Parliament as the 'two great committee-forming authorities in our Constitution..' and that they were themselves formed '..by processes of specializing and reinforcement from the original Curia Regis'.<sup>2</sup>

Until recently, there were no acknowledged guidelines for the appointment of committees and only limited advice was offered as to their procedures.<sup>3</sup> In both cases, as with much else in the operations of the British state, extensive use was made of precedent. The secrecy and contingency that surrounded the appointment of many inquiries had many advantages for legislators and administrators, but equally it permitted the inclusion of those excluded from other forms of political life, since unwritten precedents could

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<sup>2</sup> Pollock's brief account clearly expresses the overwhelming permeation of the committee as a social, legal and political form, and is also one of the few that validates the importance of non-contributing committee members.

<sup>3</sup> After the publication of the report of the Departmental Committee on the Procedure of Royal Commissions in 1910, more formal advice was offered to chairmen and members, but the selection and appointment of committees continued to be an arbitrary matter, subject to the whims of civil servants and ministers.

be stretched to permit particular appointments, say of a tenant farmer for an agricultural inquiry. That could then form a new precedent to be used if needed. Mary Douglas [1987] has described how institutions are constantly reproduced and re-made through precedent and analogy, and explains how ideas become entrenched through social progress.<sup>4</sup> Her remark that 'Constructing sameness is an essential intellectual activity that goes unobserved..' aptly describes the incorporation through indirect representation which occurred through Government committees.<sup>5</sup>

The statement also suggests the dilemma faced to some degree by all committee members; that is the necessity to balance individual and collective interests. Committees are a collective form, but are comprised of people who owe their membership to their distinctiveness, socially, politically, or professionally, and the juxtaposition of individuality and collectivity is one of the strongest justifications for the form. It is standard to classify committees or their members as expert, impartial or judicial, but in practice such demarcations are hard to identify, both for the historian and the committee member.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the initial views of the members, a collective will often takes over, which may be the result of apathy by the majority or of a positive desire by the rebellious to reach agreement with previously unknown colleagues who have become friends.

Women began to be appointed to such committees some 30 years before they were granted a limited franchise in 1918. Their inclusion can be seen as a means by which the state sought to provide a parallel means of political representation through interests as well as through the franchise, and in this way had a powerful effect on women's future political participation. Through the committee form, women were offered a representative voice in a growing, but clearly delimited, range of issues that were deemed to concern them, broadly within education, social welfare, and employment. Their achievements were limited both by their confinement to such issues and by their consistently low numbers on committees, where

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<sup>4</sup> In a system so dependent on continuity of individual service to maintain a collective memory precedents could also be forgotten. The disruption to the civil service caused by the Great War has not been comprehensively indexed, but was arguably responsible for much of the evident confusion in methods of appointment of committees. For one example see Harrison [1995], xvi, n.17.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas [1987:60].

<sup>6</sup> See Bulmer [1980].

they were appointed by analogy with other experts or representatives of interest groups.

There were few exceptions to this pattern; all-women committees and those where women were in a majority were rare. However, their existence is important in charting another form of representation based on separate forms of assembly for women. Such forms were discussed among politically active women during the later nineteenth and early twentieth century as either an adjunct or an alternative to the suffrage. The use of all-women committees by Government or its administrators was not extensive, but seems to be linked to these discussions by women and possibly to the gradualist forms of democracy that had occurred for men during the nineteenth century and were under consideration in other parts of the Empire. Through the committee system, women were offered a limited opportunity to contribute to policy-making on specific issues. All-women committees also defined women as having separate interests, and could be used by Governments to marginalise women's concerns while seeming to take them seriously.

The organisation of the thesis is not strictly chronological. The background to women's committee participation is examined in chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 gives an overview of some of the relevant historical and political works that discuss the committee form and political representation. Chapter 2 concentrates on women's social and political work, both as individuals and through a range of organisations. Chapter 3 is an account of the chronology of women's participation in committees, first as witnesses and then as full committee members from the 1890s. Chapter 4 examines some of the all-women committees that were set up during the first two decades of the twentieth century and assesses some of the reasons for their appointment at that time. Chapter 5 analyses women's work on committees, using a series of case studies taken mainly from Royal Commissions. The conclusion briefly examines some of the changes that took place during the 1920s, and draws together the main points about the nature of women's committee work.

The principal advisory committees discussed are Royal Commissions, Departmental Committees and temporary Select Committees. Royal Commissions are nominally appointed by the monarch



as temporary inquiries into matters which might require legislation, or have been identified as of general public concern. Departmental Committees have a similar rationale and procedures, but are appointed by Treasury or Departmental minute. Other committees of inquiry have neither Departmental nor Royal as their descriptor, but have much the same functions. In the majority of cases their appointments are announced in Parliament, and on completion their reports are formally presented to Parliament. Select Committees are committees of Parliament and thus have only peers or MPs as members. Women could not be members of such committees until after 1918, when they were eligible to sit in Parliament. Select Committees were an important investigatory form throughout the nineteenth century and are discussed mainly in chapter 3 because women gave evidence before them.

Between 1893 and 1930 there were approximately 200 Royal Commissions, Departmental Committees or other committees of inquiry that included women members. The number of women involved was approximately 300. The commissions and committees are listed in appendix 2, and cross-referenced to appendix 1, which gives the names and biographical details, where found, of women committee members. Biographical details of women mentioned in the thesis are given in the text only for those who were not committee members; all others are listed in the appendix. Appendix 1 is also an attempt to demonstrate the connections and networks between women. These networks are discussed in the thesis, and the footnotes contain some cross-references. However, the appendix seemed the simplest way to show the multiplicity of the connections, and the numbers of women who shared similar educational, social, political, or associational backgrounds. I have tried to give the details in the same form for those women for whom information has been found, with the names of their parents and husbands, the nature of their education, their work, membership of associations and details of publications. Most of the information was found in standard biographical dictionaries or the published registers of colleges and associations. I have given only brief details of women whose lives are well recorded elsewhere, unless I felt that a longer entry was necessary to support material in the main part of the thesis. I have also indicated at the end of entries if the woman was included in the current

*Dictionary of National Biography*, although it is likely that many more women will appear in its revised editions.

In a few cases, details were provided by the families of the women; I should have liked to include more, but although I have met with nothing but good will and interest from the people I have contacted so far, lack of time has left many entries incomplete. Several of my correspondents were unaware that their grandmothers had had such extensive public careers, although they knew that their grandfathers had attained some prominence. That lack of knowledge is not surprising given women's own attitudes to their work; they often described it as of little importance relative to that of men. Elizabeth Haldane compared her work with that of her brother and noted that

no woman could do the work a man can get through! My work does not tire me at all but it is quite different & not responsible as his is!<sup>7</sup>

When Anna Mathew wrote to George Lansbury in 1929 congratulating him on his appointment to the Labour Government, she began the letter 'If you don't remember me it does not matter much...'.

Those remarks are echoed by the correspondence and journals of many other women; their work, and especially their committee work, was seen by themselves and others as necessary, but not important or especially responsible. Such women's dismissal of their public work can tend to hide the strength of their determination for social and political reform: the women studied here, and no doubt many others who are mentioned only in the appendices, shared a form of public morality that made a powerful contribution to social policy during the years in which the foundations of the welfare state were laid. Their contribution was not necessarily a direct result of the fact that they were women, even if they were often appointed to committees only because they were women. J.S. Pedersen [1981] described the headmistresses in her study as part of a conservative tradition of social reform, and that description would fit most, if not all, of the women studied here. There were many differences between them, but they shared a particular moral outlook that was based in broadly liberal ideas about mutual duties and responsibilities in society.

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<sup>7</sup> Letter to her mother, 2-3 May 1912, Haldane Mss.6052, f.81.

**Abbreviations**

<b>BWTA</b>	British Women's Temperance Association
<b>CBE</b>	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
<b>CI</b>	Order of the Crown of India
<b>COS</b>	Charity Organisation Society
<b>DBE</b>	Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire
<b>DC</b>	Departmental Committee
<b>ESU</b>	Edinburgh Social Union
<b>GBE</b>	Knight or Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire
<b>GCVO</b>	Knight or Dame Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order
<b>ILP</b>	Independent Labour Party
<b>LGB</b>	Local Government Board
<b>LCC</b>	London County Council
<b>LSE</b>	London School of Economics
<b>NCW</b>	National Council of Women [see also NUWW]
<b>NFWW</b>	National Federation of Working Women
<b>NUSEC</b>	National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship
<b>NUWSS</b>	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
<b>NUWW</b>	National Union of Working Women
<b>NPP</b>	Non Parliamentary Paper
<b>PP</b>	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
<b>RAMC</b>	Royal Army Medical Corps
<b>RC</b>	Royal Commission

<b>SC</b>	Select Committee
<b>TUC</b>	Trades Union Congress
<b>TGWU</b>	Transport and General Workers' Union
<b>VAD</b>	Voluntary Aid Detachment
<b>WAC</b>	Women's Advisory Committee
<b>WAAC</b>	Women's Auxilliary Army Corps
<b>WCG</b>	Women's Co-operative Guild
<b>WEC</b>	Women's Employment Committee
<b>WFL</b>	Women's Freedom League
<b>WIC</b>	Women's Industrial Council
<b>WLL</b>	Women's Labour League
<b>WLA</b>	Women's Liberal Association
<b>WLF</b>	Women's Liberal Federation
<b>WLFN</b>	<i>Women's Liberal Federation News</i>
<b>WLGS</b>	Women's Local Government Society
<b>WMP</b>	Women's Municipal Party
<b>WNLA</b>	Women's National Liberal Association
<b>WPPL</b>	Women's Protective and Provident League
<b>WSPU</b>	Women's Social and Political Union
<b>WTUL</b>	Women's Trade Union League
<b>WEA</b>	Workers' Educational Association
<b>WW1</b>	World War One

## Chapter 1

**The Reproduction of the Political Nation**

In the nineteenth century the political nation, broadly defined, comprised men who ruled by virtue of elected, appointed, or inherited positions, within changing parameters of inclusion. For example, reforms to the electoral system, the placing or lifting of religious restrictions to office, or the creation of new peerages all expanded the numbers of those who made up the political class. The political nation had also always included women, sometimes in proxy positions,<sup>1</sup> and not usually in the same categories as men, although there were some exceptions. The monarchy provided the clearest example;<sup>2</sup> for most of the nineteenth century Britain was ruled by a woman, who began her reign just after the 1832 Reform Act had formalised women's exclusion from the parliamentary franchise.<sup>3</sup>

The political nation was at the same time social; the timetable of the political world was a part of the London season, and that gave further opportunities for women's involvement.<sup>4</sup> The forms of that involvement were usually unrecorded in political history, which in its conception and continued practice was restricted to matters of 'high politics': the workings of Government and administration, and the male personalities concerned. Denise Riley [1988: 51] notes the growth of the association between women as the objects of social inquiry during the nineteenth century and the definition of social problems as women's concerns; and that

One striking effect of the conceptualising of this social is its dislocation of the political. The latter takes on an intensified air of privacy and invulnerability, of 'high politics' associated with juridical and governmental power in a restricted manner.

She further notes how that division shaped women's political participation, as even the fight for the suffrage became defined as a social matter.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, as guardians of minors, or as the inheritors of official positions, with some say in public affairs.

<sup>2</sup> In early modern times there were other exceptions. Records show that some abbesses attended and voted at medieval assemblies. See Chapman & Chapman, [1909:13], and generally on women office-holders; also Graham [1929].

<sup>3</sup> The exclusion rested on the definition of the word 'person' as male: see Anderson and Zinsser [1988: 147]; Rover [1967: 3]; for an early general account of women's exclusion from the franchise see 'Ignota', 1903, and for the 'persons' debate, see Sachs and Wilson [1978].

<sup>4</sup> See Leonore Davidoff [1986] for an account of the season and its functional purposes for nineteenth century elites.

The question of how far and how much political activity can be described as social applies as much to men as to women, particularly at a time when there was no professional class of paid politicians<sup>5</sup>. Hannah Arendt's analysis [1959] of the blurring between the social and the political relies on an idealised conception of the political life in the Greek city states, as transmitted to us in the works of Aristotle and Plato, where the public world of the polis was physically as well as philosophically separated from the social. In her conceptual history, the purity of political life was short-lived, and had all but disappeared by the 'modern age'.<sup>6</sup> She cites the rise of economics as a science, and the analogy of society as a household, drawn by Adam Smith and James Mill, to demonstrate how political life had become 'social housekeeping'.<sup>7</sup>

Government committees represent one form of that social housekeeping, and the growth of women's presence on them as members offers an example of one of ways in which the social and the political worlds met and grew. Public life for many women meant a progress through a series of committees, usually involving the organisation of the lives and morals of the poor, and they became increasingly drawn into political committee work, often with the same objectives, but also through membership of groups campaigning on issues such as Home Rule or tariff reform as well as women's suffrage. Obviously all these non-Governmental associations and their attendant committees were formed from shared moral, social or political concerns, but they also provided opportunities for social contacts for women with each other, and with men. The formal aspects of committee meetings offered a relatively neutral space for people to get to know one another, thus establishing new relationships as well as reinforcing existing ones. That had always been the case for men, for whom in any case social barriers were less rigid in that there were simply

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<sup>5</sup> MPs were paid a salary of £400 a year from 1911, unless they were receiving salaries as Ministers or officers of the House. (D. & G. Butler, 1986: 210-11.)

<sup>6</sup> Arendt's chronology is not dated specifically.

<sup>7</sup> She argued that the rise of modern society was the 'the admission of household and housekeeping activities to the public realm' and 'its irresistible tendency' to incorporate what was considered political and private. [1959:42]

more public places for them to meet,<sup>8</sup> as well as the lifelong opportunities for friendships provided by their shared experiences of school and university. Women were subject to a wider range of social constraints, which dictated both meeting places and their behaviour at them. For example, formal dinner parties were occasions when both sexes could converse together, but the segregation when 'the ladies withdrew' was a source of annoyance to many women.<sup>9</sup> Government committee meetings, like many others, allowed some elite women to meet and talk to men professionally and politically in a formal atmosphere in which the usual social conventions might have seemed less restricting. Eleanor Sidgwick was apparently a poor conversationalist, but was reported to have found that committees 'provided very pleasant opportunities for getting to know people'.<sup>10</sup>

Government committee work was an extension of other forms of social, political and professional association, of which the published reports show only the public face. Evidence to committees was taken in formal, usually public sittings, but the subject under investigation was discussed in private, both in official meetings and in conversations which were a continuation of other encounters: parliamentary debates; conferences; dinner parties; breakfasts<sup>11</sup>; and trades union, party political and suffrage meetings were all part of a network within which ideas, as well as gossip, were exchanged.<sup>12</sup> These forms contributed to the reproduction and reinforcement of values in British society by intellectual as well as practical means.

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<sup>8</sup> This was true both within and between different social classes, although it did not necessarily imply any greater cross-class sympathy and understanding between men. For difficulties faced by MPs of working and middle classes, see William O. Muller, 1977; J. Harris, 1994; and M. Pugh, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> The segregated conversations could, of course, have been either weighty or frivolous, but both Lucy Cavendish and Beatrice Webb recorded in their diaries their frustration at being excluded from male political conversations.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Sidgwick, 1938: 123.

<sup>11</sup> These informal gatherings, which generally took place in the late morning, seem to have become extremely popular by the late nineteenth century; the diaries of Lucy Cavendish and Frances Balfour have a number of references to breakfasts that show that there were often guests of honour from the political or the literary establishment. Mary Gladstone recorded her first 'breakfast' on 27 April 1865, by which time 'The 10 a.m. breakfast parties had long been an established custom. Mr Samuel Rogers started them first'. [Masterman, 1930.] Samuel Rogers [1763-1855] was a banker who inherited enough money to enable him to set himself up as a poet, and was noted for his social gatherings. [See *Dictionary of National Biography*.]

<sup>12</sup> This is evident in many letters, diaries and autobiographies; see Bailey [1927], Balfour [1930], Haldane [1937], Mackenzie and Mackenzie (eds.), [1982-85], Lytton family correspondence in the Gladstone Mss., Balfour Mss. or Haldane Mss.

They were also sites of power, not all of which were closed to women, especially those who were members of the leading political families. The drawing-rooms of families such as the Cavendishes, Talbots, Balfours and Cecils were political as well as social meeting places.<sup>13</sup> Many women from these families were recognised as politically influential, a privileged group within an already privileged class, but it was an aristocratic politics of detachment rather than of democratic engagement, and was considered to have little relevance to wider female suffrage. As late as 1922, a *Times* article claimed that the influence of such women would be unaffected by women's admission to the Houses of Parliament as

there will always be room, and more than room, for those women of social position and culture who prefer to exercise their gifts less conspicuously, but it may be with greater real power<sup>14</sup>.

It was from within this extended political nation that women committee members were chosen; their initial choice determined by many of the same social criteria used to appoint men. However, there were necessarily political differences, as women could not vote in parliamentary elections or hold peerages in their own right; and had only limited access to the local franchise and public office. Committees offered a means by which some women could present their views, and enabled Governments to claim that their views were heard, just as the appointment of a Royal Commission enabled Governments to claim, with varying degrees of justification, that they were responding to the concerns of the House and the wider community in setting up an impartial inquiry into some area of public concern.

Social position, expertise and an interest in the political solution of

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<sup>13</sup> They were a form of what Arendt [1959] defined as associational public spaces, in which 'men act together in concert'. Seyla Benhabib [1993: 97-114] discusses some of the implications of Arendt's political philosophy for contemporary feminist theory, and defends Arendt's account of the changes in public life. She notes that Arendt's definition of public space highlights the procedural: not what 'public discourse' is about, but how it takes place, and draws attention to her description of the occlusion of the political with the social whereby people no longer 'act', but have roles as consumers, voters and so on. See also Joan Landes' [1988] account of the power and influence of the 'salonieres' of seventeenth and eighteenth century France, and their contribution to the integration of the traditional elite with other groups and individuals. She points to the world of the salon as a social force: 'Conversation, new works of art, bureaucratic patronage, status, wealth, and even daughters were exchanged at these gatherings'. [p.25]. For an earlier analogy of the influence of eighteenth century French political women and Englishwomen in the nineteenth century see Mary E. Ponsonby [1900 and 1901].

<sup>14</sup> 'Great Ladies in Politics' *The Times*, 19 April 1922:13.



social problems were some of the shared characteristics of committee members. Neither these attributes, nor the committees themselves, are usually seen as a form of political representation in its modern sense, although they certainly have political implications. However, they show the persistence of older forms of representation, which were based in traditional, mainly hereditary forms of rule, prosecuted through force and precedent rather than through democratic systems. Individual women had a recognised place within that system, which made the idea of their inclusion on committees relatively easy to accept. It also meant that perceptions of women's role in committees were largely determined by social conventions. They were thus confined to those inquiries that related most closely to their social roles as dispensers of practical and moral charity. That helped to create the precedent of a 'women's interest' in certain areas, which required representation among a growing number of other interests.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the history of political representation and its relationship to Government committees. It then provides an overview of some of the previous assessments of such committees, particularly the differences between historical and political science analyses. It concludes with an examination of how these writers have interpreted women's participation in Government committees.

### 1. Political Representation in nineteenth century Britain

By the early nineteenth century both the theory and practice of political representation were primarily concerned with parliamentary forms, which provided the established conventions for their discussion and implementation.<sup>15</sup> Constitutional meanings of representation had evolved through centuries of physical struggles for power, and these changes had left tangible traces in the variety of forms through which that power operated. The monarchy retained many symbolic and actual powers, although their practical applications were controlled by a narrow group of men: some elected from a narrow franchise, others who continued to hold hereditary political offices, and others, the heads of the armed forces, appointed by the

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<sup>15</sup> This is reflected in contemporary and earlier accounts, in which political representation is invariably understood to be the exercise of a (more or less) democratic franchise. Pulzer [1972] notes that the essential principle of the 1832 Reform Act was that it moved the ideology of representation away from a corporative towards an individual basis. In this view the history of political representation in the nineteenth century is the history of that ideological shift. See also Williams [1918]; Robertson [1931]; Birch [1971]; Berrington [1985]; Hart [1992].

former two groups.<sup>16</sup>

Pole [1966:4] sees the history of representation developing at two levels, and in two directions; the first involved the shifting of power from the Crown to the communities, and gave rise to the second, which was the connected process of re-centring this devolved power through representation from communities to Parliament. There were changes in the ways in which representatives were chosen, usually because of the changing balance of power between Parliament and the monarchy, but the principle had been established by medieval times: Maitland [1919: 68] noted that the first recorded examples of local representatives attending a national assembly were in 1213.<sup>17</sup>

The writing of the history of political representation has largely focused on the circumstances surrounding the creation of electorates, and the operations of Parliaments. It has taken the second of Pole's directions, and, through the changes that have produced our current electoral system, the word 'representation' has become more closely identified with democracy, so that it is usually assumed to mean democratic representation through universal suffrage. Yet, as many commentators have pointed out, the words 'democracy' and 'representation' became linked only from the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> That linkage described the relationship of each individual with the state, in a variety of mediations, of which political representation through the electoral process was only one. The primacy of this form of representation grew as successive groups of men were enfranchised but it only overlaid, or became entwined with, existing patterns of thought and activity, as they themselves were reproduced in institutional forms, through powerful lineages of patronage. When Beatrice Webb described the House of Lords as the 'worst representative assembly ever

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<sup>16</sup> See Guttsman [1963: 357] who cites C. Wright Mills [1956]: 'The hierarchies of state, and corporation and army constitute the means of power'. Guttsman's analysis of power elites pays little attention to the position of women, even though his trajectory of men in honorary positions of power and influence could also apply to women. His diagrams [pp. 363-367] showing the affiliations of elite groups are implicitly all male, but could be redrawn to show links with and between women members of those groups. This would be unlikely to alter any of the conclusions he has made about the persistence of elite government, but it would show that women were part of it.

<sup>17</sup> He further notes that even by this date 'The notion of the representation of a community by some of its members must have been old', and that 'The whole system of trial by jury in its earliest form implies representation...'. [p.70-1]

<sup>18</sup> H. Pitkin [1967]; Birch [1971].

created'<sup>19</sup>, she seemed to be confusing the modern sense of representation as democratic participation by individual agents with the embodiment of the older sense of organic representation; the implicit acceptance of a governing class that derived power from other than elective authority.<sup>20</sup>

The older sense of the meaning of representation can be traced through the history of Pole's first level of representation - the transmission of monarchical power - and is the meaning in which I suggest that committees were a form of representation. As Maitland pointed out

representation does not necessarily imply election by the represented; representatives may be chosen by a public officer or by lot.<sup>21</sup>

Committees derived their authority from that ancient connection.<sup>22</sup> They were composed of representatives of the sovereign power, initially the monarch and then the Government, and thus demonstrate the permanence of ancient meanings. The forms through which they are appointed and work; and the attempts to achieve balance in their personnel can be seen in

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Pitkin [1967: 61].

<sup>20</sup> There has, however, been much work that challenges the view that the possession of a democratic franchise offers true political representation. Macfie [1894] argued that the idea of democratic control by electors was a delusion; it merely substituted 'aristocracies of choice .... for aristocracies of birth and wealth'. More recently, attempts have been made to ally feminist definitions of women's experience with mainstream political theory, see, for example, Bryson [1992], or Jones, [1993]. Some of this writing has much in common with the moral tracts written by women in earlier generations [whether the latter would describe themselves as feminist or not], in its concern to encourage social and political awareness, albeit in a context of late 20th century relativism that refuses the biological essentialism of nineteenth century writing on and for women. See, for example, Virginia Held [1993]; Luce Irigaray [1994]. Such texts are not confined to feminist theorists: H.T. Wilson [1985] argues for a re-definition of citizenship through an analysis of the split in the study of politics between ideas and institutions and the parallel gap between political and social activity for agents; and that societal and organisational techniques that deal with political problems in non-political ways only contribute to a passive and inhibiting citizenship. Political activity should have moral and ethical qualities for individual agents [those who initiate and implement] as well as in its outcomes. In such analyses, and in many others that consider aspects of gender or ethnic or class divisions, the fusion of the political with the social described by earlier theorists has only limited validity. See also Held and Pollitt, [1986].

<sup>21</sup> Maitland, [1919: 71]. See also Birch [1966] whose introduction elaborates on the differences between representation by consent and representation by election. He defines Royal Commissions, ambassadors, Government Departments, and public utilities as examples of the former category.

<sup>22</sup> There are many examples in other societies that long pre-date Maitland's: see Gladden [1972] who traces the history of ad hoc commissions from Greek and Roman times, noting that the form was used in Athens to advise on the construction of ceremonial buildings, public markets and aqueducts.

the composition of early juries or other assemblies,<sup>23</sup> when elected or hereditary officials chose representative 'lawful men'. These forms have been constant throughout the history of the English, then British, state, and in the committees studied here had reached their strongest expression by the nineteenth century, when they continued to increase in number at the same time as the extension of the direct franchise. Their status as non-elected, yet representative bodies can be seen as acting as a brake on more democratic forms, as although it could be maintained that interests were consulted through investigative or advisory committees, the claims of universal direct representation could be temporarily ignored.

The popularity of theories of interest representation from the late eighteenth century further underlines this point. The principle of interest representation through Parliament was formulated by Edmund Burke, who, in 1770, argued that

new interests must be let into the share of representation, else possibly they may be inclined to destroy those institutions of which they are not permitted to partake...<sup>24</sup>

However, he was clear that that did not mean the surrender of power by the ruling elite, and he subsequently argued for a political morality based on the traditional authority of the ruling class; and that Members of Parliament were representative of all citizens and not just those who elected them:

With us the representative, separated from the other parts, can have no action and no existence. The government is the point of reference of the several members and districts of our representation. This is the center of our unity. This government of reference is a trustee for the whole, and not for the parts. So is the other branch of our public council, I mean the house of lords ... The very inequality of representation, which is so foolishly complained of, is perhaps the very thing which prevents us from thinking or acting as members for districts.<sup>25</sup>

The growth in the practice of the representation of interests was important in the evolution of women's political participation, and although I am principally concerned with their central Government committee work, the practical consolidation of this principle across all public boards, committees

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<sup>23</sup> See Maitland, [1919: 69-72].

<sup>24</sup> E. Burke [1770], quoted in Pole [1966: 443]. For an analysis of Burke's views on representation see Eulau et al [1978].

<sup>25</sup> Burke, [1773: 204].

and councils was to have a stronger impact on women than on any other excluded group, although in theory there was a balance of interests between such groups.<sup>26</sup> Women were defined as having separate or specific interests in political and public matters like other groups, such as trades unionists, or business or medical men. Each of these groups was likely to be a minority in terms of their interest representation on committees, but only women were visibly a minority because of their sex. However, the representative balance on such bodies was further determined by class, in terms of which women were not part of a minority, as nearly all appointments were made from the middle and upper classes. All members of such committees could call on a range of shifting alliances that developed from the social or political networks of their class: in some cases a committee could act as the catalyst for such groupings, particularly if members were involved with a semi-permanent committee such as the Consultative Committee on Education; in other cases the links pre-dated the committee and were taken into account during its appointment, for example, the Royal Commission on Secondary Education.<sup>27</sup>

The persistence of unelected forms of representation and of a whole range of hereditary offices, from peers to turnkeys, was a key factor in the continuity and reproduction of the political nation.<sup>28</sup> The growth of interest representation beyond a Parliament increasingly dominated by parties, as well as the widening of forms of the local franchise, for example through School or Poor Law Boards, gave opportunities for the participation of individuals who, although elected or appointed because of their actual or perceived qualities of expertise or concern, were often encouraged and supported by philanthropic or statistical societies with interests in social reform. The skills and knowledge of such people were recognised in their appointments to Government committees, thus enhancing the relationship

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<sup>26</sup> Diggs [1968] contrasts pictorial, dramatic or descriptive representation with practical representation. The latter is understood to be an active form - representative; while the former is passive - a representation. He does not consider the gender implications of his analysis, but it can be used to show the differences between men and women as representatives. Whatever a woman is representing she is also seen as a representation of woman, while a man is first of all a representative in Diggs' practical sense; his presence as a man is not a matter for comment. See also Pennock [1968] for a discussion of meanings of individual and collective representation. For a historical analysis of the representation of political women see Garlick et al [1992].

<sup>27</sup> Discussed more fully in chapters 3, pp. 132-140, and 5, pp. 216-223.

<sup>28</sup> Some of these continuities are traced by Joanna Innes [1996].

between the voluntary and the official that many historians of social policy have identified as one of the cornerstones of the British state.<sup>29</sup>

John Clarke [1985] has analysed one example of this relationship in what he defines as a 'progressive alliance' in the development of reforms in the treatment of young offenders. His discussion is mainly centred on the 1920s, but the typology can be applied more generally across other areas of social policy that formed the subject of investigation for many Government committees. He identifies three features of the 'alliance' between the state and outside agencies: first, that the main organisations pushing for reform existed outside the state; secondly, that such organisations were in close contact with each other, and with associations representing state agents; and thirdly, that their representatives operated inside and outside the state.<sup>30</sup>

Such alliances were not necessarily progressive, and could be contradictory; Roberts [1995] describes the problems faced by some feminist activists in the later nineteenth century who attempted to reconcile a commitment to libertarian ideals with a growing realisation that state intervention could have some beneficial results. However, the pattern defined by Clarke can be seen in many other cases and has particular force to explain the incorporation of women into advisory and administrative state forms.<sup>31</sup> He cites the case of Gertrude Tuckwell, to show the interconnections between voluntary and state initiatives in the treatment of young offenders.<sup>32</sup> Her earlier career as a trades unionist showed a similar trajectory, as she moved from the secretaryship of the Women's Trade Union

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<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Prochaska [1980 and 1995] and Thane [1982 and 1993], both of whom emphasise the importance of women's contribution in the voluntary sector. See also Harris [1990: 63-68] who summarises what she describes as the two antithetical expressions of this relationship: that is, that although Governments had acquired greater powers during the nineteenth century, citizens had acquired fuller rights, but that both trends had been 'accompanied by a proliferation of ... pluralistic interest groups unprecedented in British history', which left Government and individuals 'in many ways more impotent than they had been under the traditional, restricted, imperfectly democratic system that had prevailed earlier in the century'.

<sup>30</sup> Clarke [1985: 249-50].

<sup>31</sup> It can also be applied to the connections in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century as members of debating and statistical societies became eligible for election and were also appointed to civil service positions. For examples of the links between Government service and outside groups see Parris [1969]; Cromwell [1977]. For similar crossovers involving the settlement movement in the late nineteenth century, see Bulmer et al [1991]; Abel [1979]; Harrow [1987].

<sup>32</sup> Clarke [1985: 250].

League to membership of various state advisory and investigative bodies connected with women's employment.

At the end of the nineteenth century many people still believed that political representation through the franchise needed to be balanced by the impartial wisdom of the traditional ruling class, which, in a political system increasingly dominated by parties, was associated with individuals rather than categories. Many women believed that their sex fitted them for a particular moral role in public life, and this had strong connections with that older tradition of representation, whether or not they supported the various movements for women's franchise. Lady Frances Balfour was an active campaigner for the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, but none the less claimed that the House of Lords was 'the one and only really representative Chamber...'.<sup>33</sup>

The persistence of such older forms of representation was equally reflected in the systems of patronage through which committee appointments were made, and these, too, offered opportunities to socially or professionally elite women. That is not to deny their individual expertise or their ability as committee members, but rather to highlight the persistence of these older political forms and to indicate that they were perpetuated by social contacts and networks to which women had access.

## 2. Analyses of committees

Government ad hoc committees have been less frequently remarked upon by writers on state forms than other more permanent state institutions because they seemed, and were, so unremarkable, both in their ubiquity, and in their composition.<sup>34</sup> Frederick Pollock [1909: 53] noted that:

No Englishman who takes any part in affairs can fail to acquire some practical knowledge of committee work. It is found in every part of our social and political machinery. ... in fact the appointment of a committee is generally the first step of any number of English people gathered together for any new common purpose.<sup>35</sup>

His identification of the committee as a social form is important for our understanding of its purpose in the cohesion and reproduction of the

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<sup>33</sup> FB to Leonard Courtney, 29 June 1906, Courtney Mss. Vol. XIII.

<sup>34</sup> That is also true of their permanent counterparts in Parliament, the standing and select committees.

<sup>35</sup> Pollock, [1909:53].

political nation.<sup>36</sup> Members of Government committees did far more than collaborate [or not] to produce a report. Members often had prior connections or friendships, and developed others as they worked together; their correspondence shows that committee work provided many opportunities for members to meet socially or professionally, particularly when their investigations required travel away from London. The Treasury complaint that the Royal Commission on Technical Education '... wants sharply looking after. Members have been taking a holiday at public expense...'<sup>37</sup> might have had some narrow justification from the Government's point of view, but such visits brought practical results both in the production of the commission's comprehensive documentation of technical education in mainland Europe, and in contributing to the professional contacts of the members, who were all businessmen.<sup>38</sup> The correspondence of Charles Booth during the Scottish inquiries of the Royal Commission on Poor Laws revealed an extensive programme of sight-seeing, which might also have been seen as 'taking a holiday at public expense', but it enabled the commissioners to exchange views about their work and was important in determining the alliances between them that enabled them to produce consensual reports.<sup>39</sup>

The multiplicity of committees has tended to obscure them as an object of historical study: they feature briefly in constitutional histories; enjoyed the attention of political scientists in the 1960s and 1970s; and more recently have been discussed by historians of social policy. Their elusiveness in academic studies is part of the wider problem in the writing of what Stefan Collini [1993: 105] has called 'the Making of the English Respectable Class'. That problem was also expressed by Jose Harris

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<sup>36</sup> For a related argument see Eastwood [1994], who argues that the House of Commons was most responsive to those pressure groups enjoying social respectability and 'connections'.

<sup>37</sup> PRO.T.108/15762, 1882.

<sup>38</sup> See RC reports and evidence, *PP*, 1882, xxvii, C.3171; 1884, xxix-xxxi, C.3981; and Roscoe [1906].

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Haldane believed that social contacts were important in ensuring good working relationships on committees; for a discussion of her work see chapter 5. See Charles Booth's letters to his wife describing meetings with the other Poor Law commissioners after their formal sittings [Booth Mss.]; also Maurice [1913: 549, and 564-66] for Octavia Hill's comments on the relationship of the work of the commission to her own work; both supported the Majority Report. By contrast, Beatrice Webb, the main instigator of the Minority Report described herself as 'completely detached' from her fellow commissioners, *Diaries*, 17 July 1906; [Mackenzie, 1984: 46], and had very little social contact with those whom she considered were opposed to her views.



[1990: 65-66] when writing on the relationship between society and the state:

The relationship between government and society in Britain in the early years of the 20th century was hedged around by a network of assumptions and conventions that were well understood within the political community. One of the most important of these assumptions was that the political community itself was limited to those capable of such tacit understanding.

Both the commission as form and the commissioners as individuals, whether men or women, were part of this enclosed, but permeable world. The work of women commissioners is thus doubly obscured by their enduring portrayal as 'token', and by the hedges of assumed neutrality thrown up around the activities of the commission form itself.

Historians have been particularly reluctant to discuss committees as a governing form, being sceptical both about the value of their evidence and the relevance of their subsequent reports. Hubert Hall [1918: 92], writing about the Royal Commission on Public Records, of which he was secretary, noted that 'experienced students of Blue Books are aware of the limitations of Royal Commissions in respect of historical investigation'.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, some of the more valuable studies for a historian of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods were compiled using information from contemporary participants and administrators, so although they are useful in assessing committee practices over short periods, the non-identification of the sources makes it impossible to verify their judgments.<sup>41</sup> The Departmental Committee into the Procedure of Royal Commissions [1909-10]<sup>42</sup> was particularly reliant on this method, drawing its evidence [which was unpublished] from the statements of 19 chairmen and 23 members of previous Royal Commissions. The committee was appointed in April 1909 and thus heard evidence from the surviving chairmen of commissions at that time. Its survey was hardly comprehensive, given the numbers of possible interviewees; there were about 45 former chairmen still alive at this time.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the committee might have been overly influenced in its findings

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<sup>40</sup> See Purvis [1992] for another critique.

<sup>41</sup> Clokie & Robinson [1937] and Gosnell [1934] also rely on such information. Gosnell's [1934] analysis is based on a survey of the 33 Royal Commissions appointed since 1918.

<sup>42</sup> It was chaired by Lord Balfour of Burleigh; 1910, lviii, Cd.5235.

<sup>43</sup> The numbers of extant commission members have not been checked, but were likely to have been between 400 and 450.

by the views of its chairman. Lord Balfour had extensive experience of commission work; he had served as a member of three Royal Commissions, and chaired five. That made him possibly the most expert witness to his own inquiry, and the committee's condemnation of large commissions as unworkable might have been over-determined by his own frustrations as a chairman of such bodies.

David Anderson [1994] sums up the current state of historical research into the subject:

Royal Commissions are often ignored in historiography because historians tend to accept traditional Government inaction as an indicator of the Commission's historical importance.

Yet it is impossible to imagine British Governments operating without them: Clokie and Robinson [1937]<sup>44</sup> chart the history of Royal Commissions as predating the establishment of Parliament. In the Norman-Angevin period commissioners were often justices who reported to the monarch, and adjudicated on local conditions: the Domesday Book is usually cited as the first English example of the form. From the mid-fourteenth century they needed parliamentary sanction,<sup>45</sup> as well as royal authority, and their establishment reflected the power balance between the monarch and Parliament at any given time. For example, the Tudor monarchs set up a large number of Royal Commissions, but in the seventeenth century Parliament restricted their use. At that time they were superseded by the Select Committees of Parliament, which remained the primary investigatory form into social and political questions until the early nineteenth century, when Royal Commissions and other forms of temporary inquiry began to be used extensively.<sup>46</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Royal Commission was

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<sup>44</sup> This remains one of the few accounts of the history and formation of Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees, and is based on the work of late nineteenth century constitutional historians, such as Alpheus Todd, and [like the Balfour Committee (see above)] a series of unattributed interviews with former committee members.

<sup>45</sup> By the nineteenth century this had come to mean Government sanction; Parliament was involved only in the institution of Statutory Royal Commissions of inquiry, such as the 1898 inquiry into the University of London Act or the war-time inquiries into the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia expeditions.

<sup>46</sup> This did not mean that Select Committees were used less; their numbers equalled and often surpassed the combined numbers of all *ad hoc* committees during the period 1890-1930. Some began to take evidence from women as expert witnesses during the 1850s; this is discussed further in chapter 3.

established as the major form for Government investigation in the British state and, as Chester points out [1981: 104], part of its importance was that although it was Government appointed, it was not a committee of the House,<sup>47</sup> and did not need to include any parliamentarians, although in practice it almost always did.<sup>48</sup>

The use of Royal Commissions was paralleled by a variety of other temporary advisory non-parliamentary committees, to some of which women were also appointed from the 1890s; the most frequently used of these was the Departmental Committee, to which much of the following discussion also applies.<sup>49</sup> However, there were differences between Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees in terms of appointment, procedure and duration, even if the relationship of their deliberations to ultimate Government action was the same. Guttsman [1963: 349] sees the difference between Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees as primarily one of dignity;<sup>50</sup> other writers within the political science tradition have made similar contentions.<sup>51</sup> Martin Bulmer [1983(b)] has additionally argued that the decline in appointment of Royal Commissions and their replacement by Departmental Committees was linked to the higher costs of the more prestigious Royal Commissions. This is open to question, however, as the scale of allowable expenses was the same for all kinds of

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<sup>47</sup> Despite Clokie and Robinson's assertion that the ascendancy of Royal Commissions in this period was due to a perception of Select Committees as corrupt, that did not mean a reduction in the numbers of Select Committees nor a restriction in the range of their investigations. For example, both forms seem to have been used arbitrarily to investigate corrupt electoral practices throughout the nineteenth century. [The last was held in 1910: RC into the Worcester Election]. Only Select Committees were used to investigate parliamentary conditions and procedure, but otherwise there was considerable overlap in their areas of inquiry, as well as between those of the Departmental and Inter-Departmental Committees. Chester [1981] notes that one major restriction on the use of Select Committees was locational, in that they were only able to meet within Parliament, unless special sanction was given.

<sup>48</sup> Such claims were often somewhat disingenuous, as few of the Royal Commissions set up between 1870 and 1930 had no parliamentary members. In 1924 the Government announced that no MPs would be appointed to the Royal Commission on Food Prices; however, its chairman, Lord Geddes had previously been a minister, and the commission included one serving MP and two ex-MPS, both of whom had held Government office.

<sup>49</sup> It is also true of Inter-Departmental Committees; Departmental Commissions; non judicial Committees of Enquiry; and the various Joint Committees and Sub-Committees set up during World War I as adjuncts to or divisions of the Ministry of Reconstruction and the Committee of Imperial Defence, all of whose naming often seems to be quite arbitrary.

<sup>50</sup> See also R.V. Mansergh & N. Mansergh [1940: 24].

<sup>51</sup> Chapman [1973]. He, like Guttsman, the Manserghs and other political scientists, has concentrated his analysis on post-1945 committees.

Government committee;<sup>52</sup> furthermore, although the numbers of Royal Commissions declined in relation to those of Departmental Committees after about 1910, the number of Departmental Committees and other *ad hoc* committees of inquiry was itself in decline.<sup>53</sup>

Alpheus Todd's [1887] definition of the difference between Departmental Committees and Royal Commissions was concerned more with appointment and procedure than with questions of either cost or prestige; and although such distinctions may have become blurred both for those who appointed the committees and for those who analyse them, they were much clearer during the nineteenth century. Royal Commissions retained some distinctive qualities, which were not merely theoretical, but gave them a unique autonomy in matters of procedure and reporting. Departmental Committees were appointed by a Treasury minute or by a Secretary of State to inquire into matters of official concern, or administrative arrangements, and their members were more likely to be MPs or civil servants, although they could contain outside experts. They were not public in the same way as Royal Commissions as neither the names of their members nor their reports were required to be communicated to Parliament. The practice of submitting their reports as Command Papers<sup>54</sup> seems to have begun during the 1890s, which is when the committees themselves took on more of the characteristics of Royal Commissions. They became more public, through the publication of the names of members and of the evidence of witnesses;<sup>55</sup> they also became larger, drawing their members from a wider range of expertise and interest groups. It was during that period that they began to appoint women, who were appointed to proportionately more Departmental Committees than Royal Commissions between 1890 and 1920 [see table 1.1].

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<sup>52</sup> See *Treasury Instructions to Chairmen and Secretaries*, issued from at least the 1870s in successive revisions; for a brief discussion of the relationship of Royal Commissions to the Treasury and Home Office see E. Harrison [1995].

<sup>53</sup> See D. & G. Butler [1986].

<sup>54</sup> This has a bearing on any estimates of the numbers of such committees as there is no reliable means to compile them apart from their presentation by Command paper and subsequent recording in the indexes of the *Parliamentary Papers*.

<sup>55</sup> The examination of witnesses was also more often carried out in public.

**Table 1.1: Numbers of committees of Inquiry with women members, 1893-1939**

Numbers of committees are approximate, although not of Royal Commissions. The numbers with women members are given in brackets; for numbers of women members see table 1.2 and for individual identities see appendix 2.

RC = Royal Commission; DC = Departmental Committee; SC = Select Committee used for *ad hoc* inquiry

	RC	DC	Other	SC	% of inquiries with women members
1893-99	21 [1]	74 [10]	14 [1]	-	11
1900-18	72 [10]	116 [21]	207 [64]	-	24.1
1919-29	28 [10]	97 [37]	245 [59]	43 [4]	26.6
1930-39	9 [4]	50 [21]	104 [21]	27 [2]	25.3

**Table 1.2: Male-female membership of committees with women members, 1893-1929**

	C'tees with women members*	Male members of c'tees	Female members of c'tees	Average number of women per c'tee	Ratio of men to women members
1893-99	12	75	18	1.5	4.2:1
1900-09	16	166	34	2.1	4.9:1
1910-19	94	814	197	2.1	4.1:1
1920-29	97	999	227	2.3	4.4:1

\*Excluding all-women committees.

The average ratio of men to women during the whole period was 4.4:1.

There is a continuing ambivalence, both popular and intellectual, about the value of committees in general and Government committees in particular. Committees are seen to have a necessary participatory and representative function within all forms of organisation, yet they are rarely judged to be satisfactory. The ambivalence has been both public and personal: press reports of the appointment of inquiries were [and are] invariably complimentary, but they are usually followed by complaints about their costs or their failure to produce a report.<sup>56</sup> Individual members expressed reservations about the value of their committee work, and few admitted [or admit] to liking it but they still continued to do it.<sup>57</sup> Others have testified to the strength of the friendship or enmity resulting from it: Michael Sadler<sup>58</sup> [1922: 50] wrote that

Royal Commissions are intimate things. You come out of them either friends for life or hoping that you will not ever again be thrown so closely together.

As the most visible committee form, Royal Commissions have attracted criticism - even vitriol - from all sides, which is arguably part of their function; Bulmer [1983(a): 661] defined one of the latent functions of commissions as delaying or limiting political action, 'to deal with the politics of a situation rather than the situation itself'.<sup>59</sup> Like Pollock,<sup>60</sup> he does not take a narrowly political view of commissions and committees, and stresses their social importance as a means by which discussion can take place and information can be exchanged without parliamentary political pressure. A more positive view of commissions is common to many North American writers on the subject. It is rarely found in works by their British colleagues,

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<sup>56</sup> There are many such references in *The Times*.

<sup>57</sup> Octavia Hill made her dislike of committees clear in her evidence to the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, agreeing with the Marquess of Salisbury that committees were a waste of time, but had an extensive involvement with both political and other public committees. (RC evidence, 1884-5, xxx, C.4402-i:8966-7). She was seen as a most effective committee member by many of those with whom she worked: see Maurice [1913: 323-4 and 569]. For further examples of ambivalent views, see Leonard Courtney to Sir John Scott, 2 Feb 1894 [Vol. VI, Courtney Mss.], or the comments of Dame Mary Warnock in Hennessy [1986: 68].

<sup>58</sup> Michael Sadler [1861-1943], education reformer and promoter of technical education. For a discussion of his work on the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, see below, chapter 5.

<sup>59</sup> Bulmer's analysis is largely concerned with post-1945 inquiries, but many of his observations on the nature of commissions are valid for the earlier period discussed here.

<sup>60</sup> See above, p. 8.

whose more detailed critiques range from verses<sup>61</sup> to scholarly analyses of particular inquiries,<sup>62</sup> sometimes attracting praise and criticism in equal measure: Stewart [1896:703] commended the Royal Commission on Vaccination [1889-97] for the quality of its personnel and its evidence, but it was condemned as superfluous by Morris [1896:958]. A.P. Herbert<sup>63</sup> [1961] combined doggerel with a more sustained critique, which judged the widespread use of the committee form to be anachronistic as well as costly, and took the view that Parliament had no need of outside experts to provide it with advice. That was consistent with the complaints of many other Members of Parliament: *Hansard* is as littered with questions about if or when Parliament could expect the reports of Royal Commissions, as the Treasury records are with acerbic comments about their cost.

An earlier and more comprehensive example of hostility to the committee form were Beatrice Webb's criticisms on the Royal Commission on Labour in which she identified the particular instances that were developed in a later, wider attack co-written with her husband.<sup>64</sup> That general critique<sup>65</sup> has been a major influence on subsequent studies, and by defining commissions as primarily concerned with social research, has had some effect in determining the ways in which they and other committees have been assessed.<sup>66</sup> In the light of their own attempts to provide a rational methodology for social science, they criticised appointments, procedures, and research methods; in particular, the reliance placed by

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<sup>61</sup> See Holyoake [1908: 427] for the angry poem addressed by girl piecers in Yorkshire to Mr Wilson Patten MP when he proposed a Royal Commission into factory labour in 1833 and Harrison [1995: 89-90] for a more lighthearted example written during the Royal Commission on Sugar. A.P. Herbert's [1961] verses 'the Royal Commission on Kissing' are quoted by almost every recent book on Royal Commissions.

<sup>62</sup> In the early part of the period covered by this thesis such analyses were likely to be found in general periodical publications, but from the early part of the century they appeared in more specialist professional and academic journals, particularly those dealing with social policy or politics. Later writers are concerned mostly with the relationship of social science research and Government committees and concentrate on post-1945 inquiries: e.g. Chapman [1973]; Rhodes [1975]; Bulmer [1980].

<sup>63</sup> Sir Alan Patrick Herbert [1890-1971], a writer who was the Independent MP for Oxford University 1935-50.

<sup>64</sup> Webb [1894]. She attacked the commission for relying too much on oral evidence and too little on verified facts. One of the Secretaries of the Labour Commission, Geoffrey Drage [1860-1955], published a detailed refutation of her *Nineteenth Century* article in the September 1894 issue of the same journal.

<sup>65</sup> *Methods of Social Study* [1932].

<sup>66</sup> J. Stanyer's analysis of the Royal Commission on Local Government [1966-69] is one example, in Chapman [1973].



commissions on oral evidence,<sup>67</sup> and its collection by those untrained in methods of social investigation. However, they were also aware of the less instrumental purposes of committees, and concluded by stating that their

harsh criticism of the value of the oral evidence given before royal commissions and select and departmental committees is not intended as any depreciation of the general value of these social institutions,<sup>68</sup>

and went on to provide a brief assessment of the value of commissions.<sup>69</sup>

Variations on the points made in the Webbs' small chapter have filtered through generations of subsequent research. Studies of Royal Commissions and other types of state inquiry have mainly concentrated on analysis of the inquiry in terms of its outcome: whether its establishment was justified in terms of the problems it was set up to solve; or how it legitimates state power through the very form and language of its operations. Though such analyses differ widely in their ideological standpoints they share a depersonalisation of the inquiry, which then becomes the object of their own inquiry, so that even those accounts<sup>70</sup> that celebrate commissions as evidence of democratic participation fail to look at or take account of the actual people involved. Such analyses have mainly been undertaken by political or social scientists whose desire to impose logic on the form is defied by the resolute individuality of so many committees. In a recent example, Scott Prasser [1996: 2] insists that although such committees 'appear to exist at random..', it is possible to develop a conceptual framework to explain their role.

Some previous studies have stressed the participatory nature of British Royal Commissions, and have described them glowingly in terms of their impartial representation of the views of citizens to Government; in the words of Clokie & Robinson [1937: 6] they were a

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<sup>67</sup> This was one of her major criticisms of the RC on Labour, above, n. 64.

<sup>68</sup> S. and B. Webb [1932:156].

<sup>69</sup> A.J. Kidd [1987] offers an assessment and a critique of the Webbs' methods.

<sup>70</sup> These are primarily those written by North Americans: Cartwright [1975]; Hanser [1965]; Clokie & Robinson [1937]. As noted earlier, English commentators tend to be more reserved: Rhodes [1975], for example, takes a much more cynical view, although he does conclude that apart from serving the instrumental purposes of Government, inquiries have a broader educational function in a democratic society, and like Bulmer [1980], he concludes by stressing their educative functions. See also Vickers [1965] who examines the persuasive and educative functions of Royal Commissions in terms of their presentation of the reality of a situation and its grounding in a particular set of values. In his view, the role of such committees is to produce a compromise between a present social reality and underlying social values.

practical device ... effective methods of tapping new sources of information, of gaining access to political opinion of a nonpartisan origin, and of imparting an expert quality to the amateurish game of government .. [this] efficiency .. has occasionally enabled them to embody the merits attributed to the Ideal Senate: a model representative character, learned and inquiring impartiality, and a practical combination of the search for justice and the steps by which it is to be attained.

Hanser [1965: 132] strikes a similar celebratory note, seeing commissions as above political and class competition: 'linked to .. a partisan political system and yet able to transcend it', delivering 'competent, fatherly, mediating decisions'.<sup>71</sup>

Gosnell [1934: 88] also remarks on the impartiality of Royal Commissions, despite his observation that

Commissioners are members of the so-called governing class, which regards itself as responsible for the operation of British political institutions.

The views of these writers, all of them North American, are in contrast to the much more cynical opinions of British commentators from J. Toulmin Smith [1849]<sup>72</sup> to P. Hennessy, [1986] who are more inclined to see such commissions and committees and their members as part of a relatively closed patronage network.

Another strand in the analysis of commissions argues that their function is educative; that the public examination of witnesses and the publication of their evidence provoked widespread discussion and dissemination of ideas.<sup>73</sup> The effect of the supposed public debate is seen either as a benign mediation between Governments and citizens,<sup>74</sup> or a more or less cynical manipulation of public opinion by Governments who appoint commissions to delay action on, or deflect attention from the subject

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<sup>71</sup> The imagery of the family occurs several times in this book: democracies are described as 'fatherless, having outgrown dependence on Divine or Royal Authority'; while the particular connection of the Royal Commission to the monarchy 'represents concern for the total - the equivalent of the concern of the father for the whole family, but on the national level'.

<sup>72</sup> J. Toulmin Smith, *Government by Commissions illegal and pernicious*, 1849.

<sup>73</sup> This also applied to Departmental Committees as they became more like Royal Commissions; and increasingly to the more localised public inquiries whose use became widespread from the middle of the nineteenth century, and continued during the twentieth, while that of commissions and committees declined. [See Wraith and Lamb, 1971]

<sup>74</sup> See Hanser [1965].

being investigated.<sup>75</sup> Burton and Carlen [1979] take the point further to demonstrate that the commission embodies and reproduces state power by the quasi-judicial form of its investigations, and the class bias of its members.<sup>76</sup>

Even those writers who describe the Royal Commission as participatory also note that such participation is tightly organised: Governments, through the sponsoring ministry, choose the chairmen, who are predominantly from the legal professions;<sup>77</sup> commission members are either chosen by departments or by the chairmen with Government advice;<sup>78</sup> and the resulting commission then decides how it will operate to meet its terms of reference.<sup>79</sup> However, once appointed, the commissions are unique, and go their own, implacable way;<sup>80</sup> furthermore, since they are nominally appointed by the monarch, they survive changes of Government and are thus subject to less party political pressure than parliamentary committees, and more able to express an impartial representation of views.

Such impartiality has often been claimed as one of the classifications for commissions: Clokie and Robinson described them as either expert, representative, or impartial. Such distinctions are difficult to apply to individual commissions and their personnel, however, as although a particular commission may be composed only of experts, such people may

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<sup>75</sup> See Herbert [1961].

<sup>76</sup> It should be noted that the focus of their analysis is on post-1950 inquiries, although they do provide a brief historical overview. They see the nineteenth century increase in state investigation as part of the institutionalisation of knowledge 'into state practices [which] was a requirement of the ascendant capitalist class to control the social contradictions produced by an unstable and potentially revolutionary situation'.

<sup>77</sup> This remains the case. Cartwright [1975] analysed post 1945 commissions and committees and found that over two-thirds of chairmen were members of the judiciary, although the chairmen of two recent Royal Commissions, Lord Runciman and Sir Stewart Sutherland, are both academics.

<sup>78</sup> Ministers often took informal suggestions from people outside Government; for example, Thomas Burt wrote to Herbert Gladstone about the chairmanship of the RC on Explosions in Mines, on which Gladstone had requested his advice (9 Feb 1906: BL, Add.MS 46064); and John St Loe Strachey, editor of *The Spectator* suggested both the personnel and terms of reference for a proposed commission into Tariff Reform (Strachey Papers, House of Lords, S/16/3/1).

<sup>79</sup> Terms of reference are determined in advance by the sponsoring Ministry, often with Treasury inspired clauses requiring the commission to make any recommendations with a view to the cost of their implementation.

<sup>80</sup> After the Treasury had attempted unsuccessfully to stop the Royal Commission into Fire Brigades on the grounds of economy, S.D. Waley [Assistant Secretary at the Treasury] wrote: 'To stop a Royal Commission half-way through its enquiries is more difficult than to extract butter from a dog's mouth ...'. Waley to Harwood, 11 July 1921, PRO.T162/49/E3730.

also be in some sense representative (of, say a business or union interest) and hence more or less impartial. The degree to which commissions were representative was a matter of growing debate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and can be linked to the changes in meaning of the concept of political representation that occurred as the franchise was extended by successive Reform Acts. Appointments to Royal Commissions reflected these changes, as it gradually became accepted that the composition of committees should more directly represent specific interests in society.<sup>81</sup> However, there is no sense and certainly no evidence that this was a conscious policy change. That is unsurprising, given the lack of any clear guidelines for the appointment of advisory commissions and committees, and the generally disorganised nature of British Government administration.<sup>82</sup> Despite the regulatory activities of the Civil Service Commission in matters of qualification and examination of personnel, the actual work of Departments continued to be largely governed by precedent, with varying degrees of tension between individual Departments and between Departments and the Treasury.<sup>83</sup> Thus the degree to which Royal Commissions were representative was more likely to depend on the bias of particular Secretaries of State or Ministers, or the need of a Government to convince particular groups that their views were being considered. Both these factors had some bearing on the inclusion of women, first as expert witnesses and then as committee members.

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<sup>81</sup> This also applied to the choice of witnesses, who from the 1860s are often described by their profession and/or as representative of a particular organisation.

<sup>82</sup> This is discussed in Jordan [1994]. Jordan's focus is contemporary but he points to the continuities with the past in his analysis of the mismatch between the practice of British public administration, whose characteristic features, he claims, are uncertainty, inconsistency and disorder, and theories of government inherited from Victorian constitutional lawyers and abstract Weberian theory. Historically, this is illustrated by the fact that civil servants attempting to draw up the terms of reference for a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence resorted to sending out for a copy of 'Lowde's [sic.] *Government of England*', which gave references to two Royal Commissions which contained some information about the work of the C.I.D.' (Note on PRO File HO45/12477/496593, 18 June 1926). See also P. Williams [1970] for a discussion of the difficulty of distinguishing between the motives and appearance of Government policy in relation to old age pensions legislation.

<sup>83</sup> See e.g. Harris [1994] who draws attention to the ways in which older traditions of representation and administration persisted [p.194, 205]. Pat Thane [1990(b)] also describes the slowness of Departments to take up the reforms advocated by the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1854, citing the Treasury where no appointments were made by open competition until 1878.

### 3. Women and Government Committees

The heading deliberately reflects the problems of analysing women's contribution to such committees within existing historical and political accounts. Suzanne LaFollette [1927] wrote that

It will be foolish to assume that women are free, until books about them shall have ceased to have more than antiquarian interest. All such books, including this one, imply by their existence that women may be regarded as a class in society.<sup>84</sup>

The state of much existing scholarship, particularly in the area under discussion here, continues to make it almost impossible to avoid treating women as a separate group.<sup>85</sup>

Enough has been written over the last century to demonstrate that women did not magically spring into public prominence when some of them were granted the franchise in 1918. There is a vast literature: the re-evaluation of women in history has been almost continuous from the later nineteenth century to the present.<sup>86</sup> However, there are still strong demarcation lines around the work of women in politics, particularly when discussing the role of elite women who are invariably seen as adjuncts or supporters of their male relatives.<sup>87</sup> Their work is often indirectly, or inadvertently, devalued in accounts that support a strong and often distinctively feminist role for women in the struggle for equal rights.<sup>88</sup> There have been a few recent accounts of women's political work in relation to political parties, most of which have been mainly concerned with the history of women's involvement as members of traditional parties.<sup>89</sup> One major exception is Pat Thane's [1993] exploration of the influence of women in the British Labour Party on state formation in the early twentieth century. Her essay demonstrates that women were politically active before they were

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Rossi [ed.] 1973.

<sup>85</sup> A contemporary reassessment of this problem is offered by Janet Oppenheim [1994].

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, Graham [1929] and Chapman & Chapman [1909]; the work of women economic and social historians in the early twentieth century, (Berg [1996: 66-74] is particularly instructive on the proliferation of women historians in this period); and more recently the academic and popular work inspired by the women's, and socialist movements, for example the work of Sheila Rowbotham [1973, 1997]. See also Kanner [1987-90].

<sup>87</sup> See for example Jalland [1988]; Ridley & Percy [1992]; Fletcher [1997].

<sup>88</sup> For some recent revisions of such accounts and a consideration of the work of women whose primary commitment was not to female suffrage, see Oppenheim [1995]; Lewis [1991(a)].

<sup>89</sup> See Lowenduski [1994].

granted the franchise and indicates the extent of their institutional involvement through such organisations as the Primrose League, Women's Liberal Association, the Fabian Society, and the Women's Labour League. However, the essay's inclusion in a volume whose focus is the reassessment of women's role in the development of state social welfare policies means that its importance as a document of political history is obscured.<sup>90</sup>

Sandra Holton's [1986] discussion of women's role in the development of party politics evaluates the women's suffrage movement in Britain within the context of both new and traditional women's history and the wider historical and political context of the suffrage campaign. By contrast, few standard political histories devote more than a few pages to the suffrage campaign, and even less attention is paid to the impact of the earlier nineteenth century women's movement on public life. Thane's [1989] observation that 'the role of women in the political parties from the 1880s has been underestimated ..' is amply illustrated by the absence of any assessment of women's role in many recent histories of political parties.<sup>91</sup>

Given that more general neglect, it is hardly surprising that texts in administrative history and studies of women in politics have equally failed to examine women's work on Government committees as a form of political influence. Histories have emphasised women's enfranchisement and their struggles to define and achieve citizenship; they range from narrative or

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<sup>90</sup> This is also true of the many accounts of women's agency within the academic category of women's history. See for example Hannam [1995].

<sup>91</sup> Women have often been discussed only in relation to the suffrage campaign, and then minimally, as noted above, p.39. A survey of some of the more recent studies of the Liberal Party during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods shows no more than cursory references to the Women's Liberal Federation or to the Women's Liberal Associations, and then only in connection with the suffrage. For example, Bernstein [1986]; Bentley [1987]; Searle [1992]; I have found no discussion of the impact of women's views on the decline of the party after 1918, that reflects the disillusion expressed by such women as Frances Balfour, Elizabeth Haldane or Violet Markham in their letters and diaries. Women in the Labour Party fare slightly better in the number of suffrage references. See Tanner [1990]; Thorpe [1997]. Tanner has one reference to the Women's Labour League; Thorpe has none and has no discussion of women's early history in the party, apart from the suffrage campaign. Even this discussion is absent in Pelling's much revised history [See 1991, 9th edition]. Conservative women's associations are very briefly mentioned in Ball [1995], but their roots in women's activism and involvement in prominent political campaigns about, for example, free trade or Home Rule, between 1880 and 1930 goes unnoticed in this and many other accounts. For example, Fforde [1990]; Green [1995]; Shannon [1996].

biographical accounts about individual campaigners, or campaigns,<sup>92</sup> to those which situate women's campaigns within a more holistic feminist project.<sup>93</sup> There have been few studies that looked at women's indirect political influence as another category [among many] of manipulation by a ruling elite; women are usually discussed from the perspective of their powerlessness rather than their power.<sup>94</sup> Guttsman's analysis of political elites has very little consideration of women; he notes that to be well connected by marriage was of benefit to

..would-be governors or commissioners. The distinction of quite a few of the women .. seems above all to be that which accrues to their husbands: their own consists largely of the fact that they are not men.. [1963: 353-4].

The bulk of his analysis was concerned with the post-1940 period, and his general conclusion that kinship did not seem to be '...an important factor in the selection of the eminent..' [for honorary positions] may be more valid for that period than it was in the earlier years of the twentieth century when dynastic influence remained a powerful force in politics.<sup>95</sup> It does not adequately explain the appointment as BBC Governors of the only two women he cites in this connection, Ethel Snowden and Mary Hamilton, both of whom had recognisably independent public and political careers. Guttsman offers a further reason for their appointments with a quotation from Lord Reith:

As to Mrs Snowden, the Postmaster had to find a representative of Labour and a woman. He said he had done well to find them in the

<sup>92</sup> For example, the Pankhursts [see Mitchell [1967] or [1977], or women civil servants (see Martindale [1938], Markham [1949], McFeely [1988]); or about women in local government (see Hollis [1987]; or campaigns for educational and professional opportunities (see Kamm [1965], Donnison [1977], J.S. Pedersen [1981].

<sup>93</sup> Levine [1992] and Caine [1992] are examples of the latter. These also reflect differing approaches within contemporary feminist analysis, as indicated by Olive Banks [1990(b)]. See also Purvis's overview in Purvis [ed.] [1995].

<sup>94</sup> Jalland's [1988] discussion does register women's capacity for such indirect influence, but the nature of her study, as with Fletcher's [1997], is to demonstrate gender inequality rather than class power. Linda Colley's provisionally titled book 'Another Face of Power: The British Female Elite before the Vote' suggests a re-examination of some of the assumptions about women's influence. See Griffiths [1996: 51].

<sup>95</sup> It is not negligible at the end of the twentieth century; in October 1996 there were 1,209 peers in the House of Lords, of whom 757 held hereditary peerages. [Carlton, 1996.] In 1997, there 750 hereditary peers of whom 16 were women; 497 created peers of whom 82 are women. [Guardian, 8 January 1998, p.17.]

same person.<sup>96</sup>

Some studies have emphasised the importance attached by women suffrage campaigners to women's innate difference, and to their presentation of themselves as the natural guardians of public morality, but this was often defined in terms of class rather than gender.<sup>97</sup> Frances Balfour did not believe that women were morally superior to men, but that the political circumstances of the late nineteenth century were such that women were uniquely able to remind men of the traditional nature of public service.<sup>98</sup> The group of women who served on Government committees between the 1890s and 1930s was small in relation to their male counterparts, but was more prestigious than many of them in terms of background and/or career. Many of these women were members of powerful political families,<sup>99</sup> and others had achieved status through their political,<sup>100</sup> philanthropic,<sup>101</sup> or professional activities.<sup>102</sup> Service on committees was incidental to, but resulted from, such work and further involved them in a form of elite political activity. Their involvement in the political world, through that limited form of inclusion, helped to ensure that it continued. Whatever the determinants of their other commitments, their work as Government advisers was based on an acceptance of, and a commitment to, the existing forms, structures and values of the British

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<sup>96</sup> Guttman [1963: 344]. He goes on to note that the 'happy combination' was repeated in the appointment of Mrs Hamilton. Lord Reith's view of women's dual representative role is similar to the remarks in a 1955 Cabinet paper quoted in Hennessy [1986], below, p 47.

<sup>97</sup> See Holton [1986: 12], who quotes Millicent Fawcett: 'Women bring something to the service of the state different to that which can be brought by men.' The proceedings of conferences of the National Union of Working Women and the Women's Liberal Federation often express variations of that sentiment, but it was clear only women of their class could render such service. See also Vallance [1901-02: 185], who argued that 'Ethical freedom must begin with women, who can never be prevented from acting as natural educators'.

<sup>98</sup> This was analogous to her belief in the 1920s that the rise of the Labour Party would serve to bring the Liberal Party back to a less confrontational political ethos.

<sup>99</sup> For example, Lady Frederick Cavendish, Mrs Sidgwick, Lady Frances Balfour, Miss Haldane, Lady Bridgeman.

<sup>100</sup> This ranged from suffrage or anti-suffrage campaigns to work in local government.

<sup>101</sup> For example, Louise Creighton, or housing workers such as Octavia Hill, Emma Cons or Helen Kerr.

<sup>102</sup> For example, Dr Bryant, Mrs Webb, Mrs Burgwin, Mrs Deane Streatfeild, Mrs Tennant, Dr Scharlieb, Mrs Barton.



state.<sup>103</sup>

That commitment to, and identification with, dominant state forms has heavily obscured and often erased them from many of the standard accounts of the committee form. Most of the works discussed in the preceding section mention women only to dismiss them from serious consideration, and their presence on committees is seen as unexceptional, especially after the partial grant of the suffrage in 1918. In all the attempts to analyse why or how a committee is chosen, there is no discussion of why some included women, nor any examination of the disparity in the proportions of men to women on committees,<sup>104</sup> despite changes in other forms of political representation.

The neglect of that aspect of women's work is not confined to later commentaries: Ethel Snowden<sup>105</sup> comprehensively listed the categories of women's service to the state, from motherhood to membership of parish councils, and the 10-strong women's factory inspectorate, but failed to mention their increasing representation on Royal Commissions and other committees. Mrs Snowden was writing in support of women's suffrage, and might have been more concerned to emphasise electoral representation rather than its invited form.<sup>106</sup> The period when women were first appointed to such committees was one during which there was considerable discussion of alternative forms of political participation for women,<sup>107</sup> but

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<sup>103</sup> For some, that was also a professional commitment: for example, M. Tennant, Lucy Streatfeild and Clara Rackham were civil servants before they married.

<sup>104</sup> See table 1.2 on p.32. The first Royal Commission to include women had 17 members, three of whom were women [RC on Secondary Education 1894-5], a ratio of men to women of 4.6:1; the last to be appointed during the period covered by the thesis was the Royal Commission on Scottish Licensing Laws [1929-31] which had two women among its 14 members, a ratio of men to women of 6:1.

<sup>105</sup> 'Women and the State', Appendix to *Woman: A few Shrieks*, anonymous pamphlet, published by Garden City Press, 1909.

<sup>106</sup> In most such writing, representation was defined as the right to vote: see, for example, M. Fawcett, [1883]. Anti-suffragists discussed alternative forms, but never seem to have used Royal Commissions or Departmental Committees as their model, one exception being S.M. Mitra (1913), one of the few writers to consider women's membership of Government committees as a form of political representation. This was a theme briefly taken up by members of the Anti-Suffrage League (see Stephen [1908]), to whom he may have been responding.

<sup>107</sup> See Caroline E. Stephen [1908] who proposed a non-legislative women's chamber of the Houses of Parliament elected by women to discuss and suggest amendments to Bills 'sent to them by either House at its own discretion'.

committee service was rarely seen in this way.<sup>108</sup>

One of the earliest twentieth century analyses of the committee form [Gosnell: 1934] had only two specific references to women. Beatrice Webb's work on the Poor Law Commission was mentioned, but only in connection with her employment of special investigators.<sup>109</sup> One unidentified member of the Royal Commission on Licensing was described as 'a woman prominent in local government affairs'; and the commission itself was seen as a 'good illustration of the representative type of commission' in its recognition of '... sex, political, sectional, professional, economic and social groupings.'<sup>110</sup> As the two other women members of the commission were presumably included in some grouping other than that of their sex, the description demonstrated the unquestioned acceptance of women's double identity on such committees, and reinforced the category of sex as a proportional component within a range of other categories of representation. The Royal Commission had three women members: Shena Simon, Edith Neville and Eleanor Barton; all had been active in local government, but the reference, above, was probably to Shena Simon. The second quotation suggests the institutionalisation of gender as a form of interest representation. It is unlikely that any of the women was chosen only because she was female. All three were seen to be competent in some area of relevance to the inquiry, but were additionally deemed to represent women because of their sex. However, because the interest that had determined their appointments was one among several that were supposed to be balanced equally, that balance dominated the composition of the committee. Gender was thus one among those various interests and was given similar representative weight to, say, that of trades unions or temperance.

Clokier and Robinson's account [1937] remains the most comprehensive history of Royal Commissions of Inquiry, but does not mention the first inclusion of women in 1894, nor does it offer any consideration of their subsequent membership. There is an extensive

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<sup>108</sup> For a more detailed discussion of women's assemblies in relation to all-women Government committees see chapter 4, section 3.

<sup>109</sup> Gosnell [1934:105]. It is only comparatively recently that Helen Bosanquet's authorship of the Majority Report of the Poor Law Commission has been acknowledged by scholars. See McBriar [1987]; Lewis [1991(a)].

<sup>110</sup> Gosnell [1934:94].

discussion of representation through committees, and of representative committees, but not of women either as they were represented through, or as representatives on, committees. In their analysis of the Royal Commission on Transport [1928-30], they note that it had 'an especially representative list of witnesses'.<sup>111</sup> As none of the witnesses were women, their use of the word 'representative' to describe the list suggests a limited definition of the word.

Women's presence was registered in Wheare's [1955] analysis. He noted that there was a statutory requirement for their appointment to certain committees where 'education or other services so far as they affected girls or women required special protection..', but that such requirements were 'almost out of date now'.<sup>112</sup> Wheare defined seven categories to characterise committee members: Official, Layman, Expert, Party man, Interested party, Chairman, Secretary, within which he gave very little consideration to women. He concluded that it would probably be correct to regard them as representatives of interested parties, although his enumeration of the special qualities of 'the Layman' notes that

..he must have all the virtues of the reasonable man and also all the virtues of the unreasonable woman. Indeed, some of the best laymen are women and unreasonable women at that.

These qualities of unreasonableness enable 'the layman' to question the wisdom of experts or officials, ignoring reason and logic, and promoting a common sense view. The only other category in which Wheare explicitly discussed women was that of Chairman; he noted a series of exceptions to a tendency for chairmen to have no special knowledge of the subject under investigation, concluding with no apparent irony that:

as the chairman of the Lace Working Party was a woman, Miss Lucy Sutherland, Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and the chairman of the Hand-blown Domestic Glassware Working Party, Mr Clough Williams-Ellis, was an architect and an artist, they brought some special knowledge and skill to their task.<sup>113</sup>

Over 20 years later, Donnison [1980] offered a similar range of seven

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<sup>111</sup> Clokie & Robinson [1937:182].

<sup>112</sup> Wheare [1955:167]. The term 'statutory requirement' is misleading if applied to *ad hoc* committees: guidelines for some inquiries suggested the inclusion of women, but I have found no instances in which the provision was statutory.

<sup>113</sup> Wheare [1955: 60].

stereotypes for committee members, all assumed to be male except for the 'representative of an interest'. He and other writers might claim that their classifications were not intended to be gender specific; and that they use the masculine pronoun as a convention to designate both sexes. However, such usage serves to highlight the ambivalence of women's position on committees as both representative of all women in the interests of equity, and as individual members having some special knowledge, which might, as in the case of Miss Sutherland, be assumed to be the natural result of her sex. It was never seen as necessary by any of those writers, nor by the Governments who appointed the committees, that women should be numerically representative and should make up half of the membership. Throughout the period studied and beyond, their appointments were doubly representative: of women, broadly defined as an interest group; and of specific interests, for example, teachers or nurses or children, in which women were judged to be either predominant or particularly knowledgeable.

Such forms of classification may be retrospectively applied to the period leading up to the Great War, but it would be a mistake to think that they formed a conscious or deliberate part of the planning of committees during this time. The distinctions between committees themselves only began to be made with any degree of formalisation from the time of the Departmental Committee on Royal Commission Procedures in 1910, and that inquiry attempted no analysis of committee memberships. There are no examples in the surviving papers associated with the appointments of Government committees which indicate any official imperative to include a woman in a generally representative capacity before 1918. The confusions over women's position seem to have become much greater during the 1920s, as Governments resisted calls for equal representation of women on committees, by claiming that committee members were appointed on their merits as experts or representatives of interest groups. As women's interests had already been defined, that imposed what were accepted as natural limits on their participation.

Peter Hennessy gives further examples of these blurred definitions of representation in his anatomy of the British establishment [1986], in which the first Director of the Public Appointments Unit [Mr Jonathan Charkham]

described his job as 'to find chaps of both sexes for posts'.<sup>114</sup> Hennessy quotes a 1955 Cabinet Paper where the suggested composition of a proposed committee included 'One person (preferably a woman) well known as a social worker'.<sup>115</sup> Here again, both in the other categories of the proposed committee and in the general forms of Hennessy's analysis, the representation of women was implicit: like male committee members, women might be members of professions, economic experts or Members of Parliament, but the only area in which a woman's appointment was seen to be obligatory was that of social work.

The history of women's inclusion in the committee structure shows that these attitudes were clearly formed in, and had hardly changed since the 1890s. They share features of the institutionalised prejudice against women in power, examined in Barbara Garlick et al [1992]. Garlick's own essay in this collection discusses fictional images and descriptions of female Chartists to demonstrate contemporary fears of working-class female sexuality. Her examples mainly relate to the actions of and reactions to working-class women during the middle part of the nineteenth century, but she also discusses middle-class political activity and its ridicule in, for example, *The Punch Book of Women's Rights* and the character of Mrs Jellyby in Dickens' *Bleak House*. Garlick describes such parodies as a 'taming process', showing how such representations of women attempted to confine them by presenting particular images of womanhood to be aspired to, as others were to be ridiculed. The treatment of Beatrice Webb in many accounts demonstrates one of the clearest examples of this form of diminution of women's work. She was satirised publicly and privately by her contemporaries;<sup>116</sup> and her work on the Poor Law Commission dismissed as showing the 'danger of a strong, and quite unscrupulous, personality in such surroundings' by A.P. Herbert, who concluded by describing her as a 'Sweet girl!' [1961: 271]. Herbert's general critique was not unjustified, but, by linking it to a woman [and his article contains no direct criticism of any

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<sup>114</sup> Hennessy [1986: 21]. By 1981, as a result of Mr Charkham's endeavours, the number of chaps was 3,900, 16% of them women. In 1997, the ratio of men to women on executive bodies was 75:25, or 2,686 men and 881 women; on advisory bodies the ratio of men to women was 72:28 or 4,999 men to 1,951 women. [Figures taken from *Public Bodies, 1997*.]

<sup>115</sup> Hennessy [1986:12].

<sup>116</sup> See Epstein Nord [1985: 3-8] for a discussion of such caricatures. Nancy Astor was subject to similar treatment, which has continued recently; see successive issues of the *Spectator* 1995-96.

other individual], it served to reinforce negative stereotypes of women on committees.<sup>117</sup>

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### Conclusion

Negative descriptions of women committee members must be considered within the context of apparently equally negative attitudes to the committees themselves, that were often promoted by committee members. There was hostility to women in public life, but it was usually not expressed against them as members of Government committees.<sup>118</sup> Committees attract their own hostility, which forms part of the self-deprecatory screen behind which the political nation perpetuates itself. Much of the cynicism about committees has come from those who are or were committee members and thus part of that expanded establishment. It can also be seen in much of the commentary about committees. There is an English tradition of committee critique, from Toulmin Smith to A. P. Herbert and P. Hennessy, in which committees are dismissed as ineffectual, despite the recognition of the social and political power of many of their members.

The dismissal of women from political history has some similarities with the treatment of committees, in that neither women's political activity nor the work of committees are considered to be part of mainstream politics. The very limited discussion of women's committee work in academic literature reflects that view in microcosm. Women's representation on committees was invited and accepted as an extension of their existing and traditionally supportive roles as members of the ruling elite, but they were always subordinate members. As Riley [1988] has pointed out, there was a re-definition of the social to differentiate women's concerns from those of men, which in its naming linked what were judged to be the more frivolous matters of social events with worthy philanthropic endeavour.

We accept the term social activism for women, but are reluctant to describe their philanthropic or charitable work as political. The analyses of women's committee work that follow will show that our acceptance is often

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<sup>117</sup> For a discussion of these attitudes, see Margaret Mackworth, Lady Rhondda, who reflected that the widespread antagonism towards middle-aged middle class women was in part the result of a public school education system that taught boys and young men to regard women as only sexual objects. 'When a woman ceases to cause in him these physical reactions her whole *raison d'être* has ceased ...'. [Mackworth: 1937: 62-66.]

<sup>118</sup> The greatest hostility was expressed towards all-women committees, see discussion of the Committee of Inquiry into the Boer War Concentration Camps in chapter 4, below.

justified by the attitudes of the women concerned. Women's entry into public life (whether or not it was defined as political) was a matter of individual interest and opportunity combined with the ability to manipulate or resist institutional structures as much as a series of planned initiatives. That is not to ignore the undoubted strategies of many organised women and men, based in beliefs about equality and justice, for example the Women's Local Government Society<sup>119</sup> campaign to have women representatives on all elected authorities in local government. However, for most women there was much that was contingent and arbitrary in their political, professional and social activities.<sup>120</sup>

There was a matching sense of contingency in the attitudes of the state administrators who appointed women to committees. As I shall show, the members of Governments and the higher civil service who determined such matters may have tried to use women's appointments to committees to deflect attention from other problems,<sup>121</sup> while at the same time offering women a very limited part in policy-making. Their insistence that women's contribution to committee work was because of their special knowledge of social conditions was political in that it circumscribed women's activity in the political world, mainly to matters concerned with health, education and the welfare of women and children. The German historian W. Dibelius wrote that

The English state rests on two specifically English assumptions - common sense, and the transformation of the antagonist into a privileged colleague.<sup>122</sup>

Committees were one of the means of transformation,<sup>123</sup> and through the nineteenth century changes in their composition recognised (even if they did

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<sup>119</sup> See Hollis [1987]. It was also true for those involved in the anti-slavery, tariff reform or home rule campaigns.

<sup>120</sup> Hollis [1987] points out that some may have sought electoral office in order to show that women could be elected rather than from any interest in the actual position; while others may have been drawn into political activity through their paid or charitable work. She cites Emily Davies and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson who stood for election to the London School Board to challenge women's right to do so, rather than from any keen interest in the education of London children.

<sup>121</sup> This is examined in chapter 4.

<sup>122</sup> Dibelius [1934: 503].

<sup>123</sup> Some antagonists were less readily incorporated - the British Government's variety of common sense had failed to extend privileged status across the Irish Sea, although as Jose Harris [1994: 38] points out Ireland was the unique exception to an 'extraordinary coexistence of extreme social inequality with respect for and observance of the law ... of endemic structural and economic change with social and institutional cohesion, that characterised British society for most of the period 1870 to 1914'.

not always directly reflect) the changes in political representation as the political nation expanded.



## Chapter 2

**The Political Intelligence of Women, 1870-1930**

This chapter takes two meanings of intelligence to examine women's political activity: first, the transmission of political information; and secondly, the existence and growth of a large group of women intellectuals who influenced Government policies as paid and unpaid advisers. It concentrates primarily on the women who served on Government committees, but does not confine the discussion of political activity to committee work. It describes a number of women who represent these definitions of intelligence through the informal networks of family and friendships; through the more formal relationships of their common professional or educational experiences; and through their work in political associations. It concludes with a discussion of the National Union of Women Workers, which was a key association linking most middle-class and many elite women with voluntary and, in fewer cases, professional interests. The NUWW was not overtly political in a party sense, but had an important campaigning role, through which it became recognised and accepted by successive Governments as generally representative of women's views. That recognition was evident in the choice of so many of its members as witnesses or members of Government committees; the majority of those women members for whom biographical information has been traced were members of the NUWW.<sup>1</sup>

It should be emphasised that these categories were not separate, and that no clear delineation can be made between the different kinds of connection. Indeed, the inter-connection is important in understanding the nature of this form of women's political participation. Such connections were also a feature of men's political activity and in that sense women's political behaviour should not be seen as different from that of men, particularly in its articulation of forms of public morality, although there were clearly huge differences in the degree to which women could be effective public moralists. Stefan Collini [1993] has examined the exercise of public morality through the institutional practices of a group of late Victorian male

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 contains the names of 342 women, of whom at least 133 were members of the NUWW. There are many other names in the NUWW records that are the same as those of women committee members, but I have been unable to find enough additional information to verify that they are the same people.

intellectuals, and although he excludes all but a few women,<sup>2</sup> the term can, none the less, be applied equally forcefully to many of the women who served on Government committees during this period.<sup>3</sup> His definition of a public moralist comprises a particular description of intellectuality, which he claims could not be applied to women at this period, involving membership of Parliament, university education, legal training, and writing. These criteria for membership of the 'overlapping political, social, and intellectual circles which might be loosely referred to as the "governing" or "educated" classes.'<sup>4</sup> need very little re-articulation to include many of the women studied here, particularly during the closing years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth centuries. Women could not be members of Parliament nor practise law until 1918; but the impact of university-trained women in many professions, notably education and medicine, was growing during the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Women writers, both from that group and from among those with the more usual female education, were increasingly well represented in literary, academic, political, and professional publications.<sup>6</sup> Writing continued to be an important means of livelihood for women in reduced circumstances whose lack of formal education left them with no other professional training: Frances Balfour and Louise Creighton both augmented relatively low family incomes with their

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<sup>2</sup> Only George Eliot and Mary Ward find a place in his analysis. See Collini [1993:3].

<sup>3</sup> It would obviously also apply to many other women who were not chosen for committee work, but who shared similar interests with, or came from similar backgrounds to, the women studied here. The political, social and professional backgrounds of elite men and women supported and endlessly re-created a consistent public morality.

<sup>4</sup> Collini [1993: 3].

<sup>5</sup> Maxine Berg [1996] describes the academic careers of some of these women, and notes the coincidence of their rise with a period when social policy issues were central to British intellectual life [p.10]. See also J. Harris [1992] for a more detailed discussion of the relationship of philosophies of social welfare to political thought.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Helen Bosanquet who edited the COS Review and was a frequent contributor to the *International Journal of Ethics*; see, particularly her 'The Intellectual Influence of Women' [1905-06]. The journal had a consistent minority of women writers and reviewers, particularly Sophie Bryant [who was a founder editor], Helen Wodehouse and Eleanor Rathbone, until its production was largely transferred to the USA in the 1930s. Octavia Hill, Mona Wilson and Clara Collet were also contributors. As well as their work on male dominated publications women also produced their own journals, such as the *Englishwoman's Review*, the *Englishwoman*, and those concerned with the suffrage or other specialist topics, for example the journals of the Women's Freedom League, the Women's Social and Political Union and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. For a discussion of the recognition of women writers by contemporary compendia of public achievement see Jihang Park [1987].

earnings from writing. The mere listing<sup>7</sup> of the publications of the women who served on Government committees during this period is evidence of the extent of women's participation in one articulation of intellectual life. The expertise that they and others brought to such advisory work is another.

The parliamentary and legal components of Collini's definition of a public moralist could not be met in the same way, yet women did not lack knowledge in either of these areas. Some women studied law as a degree,<sup>8</sup> and others learned its applications for particular professional or philanthropic purposes: for example, those who followed courses of study leading to the National Health Society's diplomas in social work, like Lucy Deane and Rose Squire, both of whom went on to become factory inspectors<sup>9</sup> and were expected to mount their own prosecutions in magistrates' courts.<sup>10</sup> Collini's picture of the House of Commons as one of the primary foci of intellectual debate had faded by the beginning of the twentieth century, and both the small group of women MPs who served during the period and the majority of their male colleagues would have been found lacking if judged by the standards that prevailed in Gladstone's time.<sup>11</sup> Women in Parliament were criticised because their speeches lacked brilliance,<sup>12</sup> but there was no lack of compelling women speakers in public life: Ethel Snowden and Madeleine Symons were among those noted by

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix 1 does not contain complete bibliographies, but I have noted some titles and given the topics on which the women wrote.

<sup>8</sup> See Sachs [1978:172]; he notes that although women could study for degrees in law during the nineteenth century, they were not able to practise as solicitors. Some were employed as legal assistants. Eliza Orme was the co-partner, with another woman, in a firm of conveyancers.

<sup>9</sup> For an account of the first women factory inspectors, see McFeely [1988].

<sup>10</sup> Women JPs are another related example, and many of the first women appointed as Justices had gained substantial legal expertise through work as Inspectors or labour organisers; for example, Lucy Deane; Gertrude Tuckwell, who was also a member of the Lord Chancellor's Committee of Inquiry into the the appointment of women JPs [see below, pp. 210-11 chapter 4]; Clara Rackham; and Madeleine Symons.

<sup>11</sup> Even that alleged eloquence might have been coloured by hindsight. Gladstone might have been an excellent speaker, but others were not. [See Mulock, 1863.]

<sup>12</sup> See B. Harrison [1986:633], who discusses the psychological and physical constraints for women in Parliament; and Frances Balfour's account of Asquith's dismissive description of women MPs, '...very down on all the women's first efforts in the House..' [F. Balfour to her son Frank, 1 Feb 1924; Balfour Mss. GDD.433/2/371]

their contemporaries for their ability to argue a case and hold an audience.<sup>13</sup>

Women were unable to participate actively in the debates in the House but they were not prevented from observing them, and that was itself an intellectual as well as a political formation. The enthusiasm shown by many women for a place in the stifling atmosphere of the Ladies' Gallery is sometimes dismissed as a form of hero-worship or wifely duty.<sup>14</sup> Although that might often have been the case for some women, for others it was clearly more than duty; many journals and letters record the writer's first visit to Parliament, usually when quite young,<sup>15</sup> and the strong impression that it made on her. Elizabeth Haldane was 19 when she first attended the House on 16 June 1881 to hear her brother speak,<sup>16</sup> and thereafter rarely missed a State Opening, but while she clearly enjoyed the ceremonial pageantry, her letters also attest to a keen interest in the subjects being debated:

.. we spent about 5 or 6 hours in the House! The subject was interesting (Capital Punishment) so we stayed till the division. There were no very remarkable speeches ...<sup>17</sup>

Others made their written comments more publicly: one early observer was Dinah Mulock who, in 1863 wrote of her impressions from the Ladies' Gallery in an article whose tone ranges from irony to eulogy. She set up a scene of noble debate before an audience of vapid women who did not understand politics and were interested only in the occasion '...who care little

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<sup>13</sup> Frances Balfour wrote to Millicent Fawcett of Mrs Snowden: 'She is a Primitive Methodist, and preaches. I thought she must be a preacher from the way she spoke. She is really an excellent speaker..' [5 May 1907; Fawcett Mss. 1B3/16]. See also profile in *Time and Tide*, 22 April 1921 and Cross [1966], who also noted that she was the most active of the non-militant suffrage speakers and addressed about 200 public meetings a year [p.113]. Madeleine Symons joined the WTUL as a young graduate with a strong reputation for her debating skills, and for this reason was frequently chosen to lead deputations to ministers and to address large public meetings; the *Daily Sketch* described her as a "spell binder" because of her gift of oratory.., [23 April 1920: cutting in Tuckwell Papers].

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Gladstone and Margot Asquith are often cited in this connection. See McLeod [1976: 140-41; 168]; Jalland [1988: 193-4] has some reservations about such an interpretation, but does describe Kate Courtney as 'the ideal political wife who could fulfil her responsibilities with genuine enthusiasm' [1988:195].

<sup>15</sup> Lucy Lyttelton made her first visit at the age of 14 when she went to the Commons on 26 February 1857 while her sister Meriel went to the Lords [Bailey, ed., (1927: 49)]; Frances Balfour's early diaries also mention visits to the House and to the Foreign Office when her father, the Duke of Argyll was Secretary of State for India [1868-74].

<sup>16</sup> She also went to hear him in court [E.S. Haldane to her mother, 25 June 1881; Haldane Mss. 6046, f.73].

<sup>17</sup> E.S. Haldane to her mother, 23 June 1881, [Haldane Mss. 6046, f.69].

for the great question of the night..'.<sup>18</sup> She then gave an account of a speech by Sir George Bowyer:

Repetition innumerable, every idea re-appearing again and again, clothed in slightly altered phraseology; assertions given for arguments, and invective for simple statements; involutions and divergencies interminable, till the original subject was buried under one mass of inextricable confusion - this was the impression his speech made upon the unprejudiced female mind.<sup>19</sup>

Her comments on the way that this and subsequent contributions were received by other members were equally unfavourable: at one point the House took the opportunity for '..unanimous evasion..' and the ladies also retired for tea, returning '..much invigorated - as we trust were the noble feeders below..'.

Quite apart from the inspirational scenes below them, regular attenders built up a network of friendships and acquaintances: Elizabeth Haldane recounted travelling with

..two very voluble ladies. One ... a neighbour of the House..; the other was the wife of an MP. They talked of Primrose League and election matters.<sup>20</sup>

Frances Balfour, in correspondence with Catherine Courtney over whether Leonard Courtney should stand for Speaker of the House in 1895, alluded to the powerful position of the Speaker's wife, remarking finally that 'The depression that you are not to reign in the Gallery is complete & universall!'.<sup>21</sup> Almost 25 years later she wrote to Mary Drew recalling Catherine Gladstone,

...as I stood alone in my generation in a crowd of very modern women, seeing Nancy Astor take her seat. A.J.'s shyness an embarrassment, simply ludicrous. Mrs L.G. in her (yr. Mother's) seat, tho' her figure was present to me.<sup>22</sup> [Her emphasis.]

Beatrice Webb [1938: 83-4] recalled her attendance at debates as part of her 'search for a creed' and as a component of her 'pious resolution to keep "out of society"..', and she and other women learnt a great deal

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<sup>18</sup> Mulock refers to this as a debate on Italy. From the descriptions she gives of the speeches and speakers, it seems most likely that she was alluding to a debate on commerce with Naples that took place on 8 May 1863. See *Hansard* [170], 8 May 1863, 1397-1499.

<sup>19</sup> Mulock [1863: 429].

<sup>20</sup> E.S. Haldane to her mother, 10 Sept 1888, [Haldane Mss. 6046, f.180].

<sup>21</sup> Undated letter, 25?March, 1895, [Courtney Mss., Vol. VI, 29]

<sup>22</sup> 7 Dec 1919, [Gladstone Mss., 46238].

about procedures from their observation of parliamentary business. Lady Frances Balfour was recognised as an authority on constitutional and parliamentary matters; much of her knowledge came from reading, but it was matched by the attention she paid to debates in both Houses, and the opportunities for discussions with individual peers and MPs. Women used attendance at the House for a variety of purposes: to make and maintain friendships that might also have had political relevance; to inform themselves about current political debates and parliamentary procedures; and, through journalism and private correspondence, to pass this and other information to friends and colleagues.<sup>23</sup>

The women discussed here, together with those listed in appendix 1, represent a substantial group who were gradually being admitted to at least the peripheries of political power. Their political links were formed in and expressed through family, social, educational and professional networks as well as the institutional forms of party and suffrage organisations. An examination of the activities and views of some individuals shows that interpretations of women's political action that define it as a minor extension of their social lives are unbalanced; it was an integral part of social life for many women. Clearly, politics was not an all-absorbing occupation for women; but nor was it for men who equally combined a round of professional, social, charitable and domestic activity, although not necessarily in the same proportions as women. Clearly, too, this was a way of life restricted to a privileged group, as Frances Balfour wrote in her reminiscences of Catherine Gladstone:

...It was an age & an atmosphere that gave women a chance if they were well placed, but the waters were deeper & the prospects bad for those who were not well born, in every sense of the word.<sup>24</sup>

As she implied, there had been changes, although the divide continued between those whose families provided both their political formation and the means to articulate it, and those for whom political interests developed through education and subsequent employment. The distinction is not entirely class-based, although those who came from the established landowning families, which comprised the majority of the political elite, were

<sup>23</sup> The correspondence between Millicent Fawcett and Frances Balfour shows how the latter used her extensive knowledge and contacts to keep her suffrage colleagues informed of relevant parliamentary business.

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Mary Drew, 7 Dec 1919, [Gladstone Mss. 46238].

less likely to have - or to need - educational or professional networks.

However, as it also reflects some of the differences between those chosen to serve on particular types of committees, it is useful as a way of examining how some women developed ideas about politics, and as frameworks for their own political actions.

During this period women's representation on a range of public bodies increased. By 1907 they were eligible to elect and be elected to all forms of local government [subject to the same property and other qualifications as men];<sup>25</sup> they held honorary positions on management committees for schools and some hospitals; and were members<sup>26</sup> of advisory and regulatory boards set up by central Government. At the same time the organised suffrage movement was forcing attention on the limitations of all such participation while women lacked parliamentary representation as voters or MPs. The range and number of organisations with which women were involved during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were enormous and probably incalculable. The *Women's Liberal Federation News* noted in 1910 that a committee of men had been formed 'with the benevolent object of "reconciling" the different societies which exist for Woman Suffrage', and listed a selection with the remark that the full list 'would deter any but brave men from the task'.<sup>27</sup> More recently Brian Harrison [1987: 4-5] attempted a similar but more restricted listing to indicate the changes in women's organisations between 1888-1934.

Philanthropic activity was the impetus for many women's organisations,<sup>28</sup> while others began as discussion groups, like those set up in the mid-nineteenth century by the women who became known as the Langham Place Circle,<sup>29</sup> or the societies formed for the promotion of women's and girls' education, such as the Edinburgh Ladies Educational

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<sup>25</sup> See Hollis [1987: Appendix B].

<sup>26</sup> Some of these were paid positions held by women civil servants, whose numbers had also increased during the period.

<sup>27</sup> *WLFN*, 1[4] April 1910, p.6.

<sup>28</sup> See Prochaska [1980]; Davidoff and Hall [1987: 429-36].

<sup>29</sup> For an account of this group see Lacey [1987].

Association formed in 1869.<sup>30</sup> Women in mixed societies frequently formed women's committees, or created a separate women's association; the British Women's Temperance Association and the Ladies' Sanitary Association both started in that way. All such groups were galvanised by the impact of the organised suffrage movement from the 1860s, which fractured some, and focused others. There were also organisations with specific party links: Women's Liberal Associations, and Co-operative Women's Guilds, which were formed as complements to the main male-dominated grouping.<sup>31</sup> Finally there were the women's trade unions, many of which had been formed as a result of middle-class women's activity through the Women's Protective and Provident League.<sup>32</sup>

All these organisations had important educational and social functions as well as their particular stated aims. They enabled women to meet, to exchange views, and to gain experience of administration, campaigning and public speaking. One side-effect of such activity was a growth in the already extensive handbook industry with such titles as the 'Handbook for women engaged in social and political work', produced by

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<sup>30</sup> Flora and Louisa Stevenson, Elizabeth Haldane and Helen Kerr [see Appendix] were members of the Association. It was instrumental in the establishment [1877] of St Leonard's High School for Girls in St Andrews which became one of the most popular girls' schools, and at which longstanding friendships were formed between some of the women in this study. See Anon. [1977: 2-9] for the school's history; appendix 1 for details of those attending the school. St Leonard's school and the Cheltenham Ladies College appear more often than other major girls' schools, although I have been unable to collate much information about schooling.

<sup>31</sup> The Primrose League had some similarities, but did not divide in the same way. It was founded as a male organisation in 1883, and admitted women in 1885; they had their own executive structure, but were never given a separate name, and the League as a whole gradually came to be seen as a women's organisation. It should also be noted that there was no separate women's organisation within the Conservative Party, corresponding either to the Women's Liberal Associations or the Women's Labour League, until after World War 1, although Conservative women did form an association in support of women's franchise in 1908, [the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association]. There were also various women's political groups formed over the issue of Free Trade; see Joni Lovenduski et al. [1994], especially p.619, and more generally for the history of women in the Conservative Party. For a comparison of the Primrose League and the Liberal Women's Associations, see Linda Walker [1987].

<sup>32</sup> Founded by Emma Paterson [1848-1886] in 1874 as the Women's Protective and Provident League and its first secretary; after her death, Lady Dilke succeeded with the title of President and the name was changed to the Women's Trade Union League. See Goldman [1974], Boston [1987] and Thom [1986].



the National Society for Women's Suffrage in 1871;<sup>33</sup> and a number of articles on the subject of women and public life.<sup>34</sup> Most campaigning groups had a very similar administrative structure: an executive committee with a number of dependent sub-committees including finance, education, literature [this usually meant what would now be called publicity], membership, and legislation. That similarity of form eased communication between women, and between women and men. Several women held similar positions in different organisations, in which they were usually members of the executives; for example, Gertrude Emmott, Margaret MacDonald, Edith Lyttelton, and Violet Markham.<sup>35</sup>

The legislative or parliamentary sub-committee of an organisation tried to ensure that members had notice of bills or committees that interested them, a task made easier for women in 1895 with the creation of the Stansfeld Trust.<sup>36</sup> The object of the Trust was to promote equality between men and women in all aspects of the law with the endowment of a lectureship to spread knowledge of women's position under common and statute law, and the appointment of a scrutineer of proposed legislative and other measures that affected women.<sup>37</sup> The National Union of Working Women initiated its legislative sub-committee in 1896 with a subscription to the Trust's papers, which were circulated to local branches each year. The Trust was clearly important in alerting women's associations to measures

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<sup>33</sup> The annual NUWW and WLF conferences often included papers on public speaking or the organisation of committee work; for example Miss E.F.E. Yeatman spoke to the 1896 NUWW Conference on 'The proper way of conducting and working upon philanthropic committees, both as regards the practical business and the spirit in which such work should be done'. See also the records of the Edinburgh Social Union.

<sup>34</sup> Such articles were often hostile; see, for example, Lonsdale [1884], or Oakley [1896], although Harriet McIlquham [a leading member of the Women's Liberal Federation and of the Women's Local Government Society] published a critique of Oakley.

<sup>35</sup> Margaret MacDonald [1870-1911] did not serve on any Government committees, but compiled evidence and appeared as a witness before many inquiries, as a member of the NUWW, WIC, or WLL.

<sup>36</sup> The Trust was created by subscription in honour of Sir James Stansfeld MP, a prominent supporter of women's suffrage, and, as President of the Local Government Board, responsible for the appointment of Mrs Jane Nassau Senior as the first woman Poor Law Inspector in 1872.

<sup>37</sup> The Scrutineer was preferably to be a woman, according to the Deed establishing the Trust, which also ruled that the majority of the Trustees should be women. The first Scrutineer was Miss M.S. Sim, and the last was Miss M.J. Taylor. The Trust was wound up in 1934 and its assets were divided between the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the Josephine Butler Memorial Home. See Kilgour [1934] and the *Summary of Women's Federation News*, October 1895, p.7.

that affected them,<sup>38</sup> and by 1898 its reports were being sent to 53 societies and a number of private subscribers. It also provided paid and voluntary employment for a number of women,<sup>39</sup> but it also continued to institutionalise their parliamentary marginalisation, by marking certain areas as women's business.

Many women who were to become prominent in public or political life began their careers with honorary positions in a number of such organisations. Gertrude Emmott was a member of her local Women's Liberal Association in Oldham as well as an investigator for the Women's Industrial Council, and a member of the National Union of Working Women. Margaret MacDonald was an executive member of the Women's Industrial Council [1894-1910], a founder of the Women's Labour League [1906], and convenor of the NUWW's industrial committee [1896-1911]. Her close friend Lady Mary Murray<sup>40</sup> was a vice-President of the WIC and a member of the executive committee of the Women's Liberal Federation. Lady Frances Balfour combined her suffrage work with membership of the NUWW, WLF, the British Women's Temperance Association, and the Women's Free Trade Union<sup>41</sup> of which she was a co-founder; she was also briefly the social secretary of the Victoria League; and a subscriber to the Women's Co-operative Guild and the Women's Labour League. Such multiple memberships made possible a considerable interchange of information and the correspondence of these women to one another and to others beyond the immediate networks of the organisations frequently concerned events connected with, or discussions at meetings of, various associations.

### 1. Political Information and Families

The idea that women were involved in the dissemination of political ideas and information is not new. Their role as advisers and confidantes to male

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<sup>38</sup> The reports of the Women's Liberal Federation, the Women's Industrial Council and the Women's Trade Union League all indicate their reliance on the Stansfeld Papers.

<sup>39</sup> Gertrude Emmott was an early Honorary Treasurer. Several of the early trustees were involved with the Women's Local Government Society and others had worked with Josephine Butler for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

<sup>40</sup> Lady Mary Murray [1889-1956] was married to the classical scholar and writer Gilbert Murray. Her mother, Lady Rosalind Carlisle, was a president of the WLF. Among the Murrays' correspondents were Eleanor Sidgwick, Emily Penrose, Rosalind Nash and Beatrice Webb.

<sup>41</sup> This was not a trade union, but an organisation of Liberal women who supported free trade, founded in 1903.

politicians has been widely discussed;<sup>42</sup> and certain individuals have been recognised as influential through their family and social networks.

Committee work was both a formalisation and extension of that role, allowing the participation of individuals who were often well known to the committee's selectors and many of its other members. It was also itself a form for the transmission of political intelligence; information could be exchanged or ideas discussed, just as at other gatherings of like-minded people. This seems so obvious as to be hardly worth stating, but such opportunities were, and remain, important in creating sameness and thus in reinforcing the political world.<sup>43</sup>

Social position was a key factor in the choice of members for committees, as it was for other political bodies.<sup>44</sup> That dominance of the social combined with the rise of ideas about interest representation meant that women's inclusion as committee members was probably more easily accepted than their entry to the professions or to unpaid positions as councillors. Many of the women members of committees, and particularly of Royal Commissions, had a higher social position than many of their male colleagues and thus far greater access to the formal and informal passing places of information.<sup>45</sup> Lady Birchenough's modest denial of any 'special or expert knowledge' when accepting her appointment to the 1918 Women's Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction<sup>46</sup> assumed that these were the sole qualities which determined such nominations. However, as the committee's Secretary, J. Eustace Davies, wrote to its chairman, Lady Emmott:

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<sup>42</sup>Most analyses of women's political role in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries take that focus. See Jersey [1890]; Ponsonby [1901]; *Times*, 19 April 1922, 13d, 'Great Ladies in Politics'. For some re-assessments of elite women's role in public life, see Landes [1988] and Garlick et al [1992].

<sup>43</sup> See Douglas [1987] for arguments about the importance of recognising shared characteristics in organisations and the individuals who work in them.

<sup>44</sup> The operation of committees was determined by precedents that clearly had social analogies: great care was taken over the form of warrants and the order in which names appeared.

<sup>45</sup> The growth of elite women's participation in the committee form offers one qualification to the view that during the nineteenth century they had lost some of their former influence. See Caine [1997:22-23] for an overview of changing ideals of womanhood in the nineteenth century.

<sup>46</sup> See chapter 4, below, for a discussion of the work of the committee and appendix 4 for the structure of the Ministry of Reconstruction.

the Minister told Sir Henry<sup>47</sup> he was very anxious for her to join this informal Committee; and I think you will find her really helpful. Her presence will also help you to keep in closer touch with the men Chairmen, as Sir Henry is Chairman of that Committee, and discusses many of these questions at home.<sup>48</sup>

That is an explicit example of what was probably regarded as natural behaviour. We are inclined to forget when we demarcate women's activity as private and men's as public that men and women did talk to one another; that men, as well as gossiping in their clubs, went home and gossiped to their wives, sisters and mothers. The ideology of separate spheres, which was current in the nineteenth century and emphasised women's difference, especially their domestic, nurturing qualities,<sup>49</sup> has coloured much subsequent academic writing, but has been the subject of much recent debate and revision.<sup>50</sup> A number of individual studies have argued that there was less separation between men's and women's lives and interests than some earlier accounts maintained. Several studies have noted the importance of companionship in Victorian and Edwardian marriages, and equally in the relationships between parents and children, and between siblings.<sup>51</sup> Neither perspective should be seen as exclusive; a view of families as coldly atomised units full of repressed individuals should not be replaced with one that eulogises them as cheerful collections of mutually supportive members.<sup>52</sup> The women studied here had a range of experiences of family life, but there were a number of shared features which contributed to the formation of their political and other interests.

The early education and socialisation of girls and boys in upper and

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<sup>47</sup> Sir Henry Birchenough chaired the Ministry's Chairmen's Committee, a body which oversaw the work of the Ministry's many sub-committees.

<sup>48</sup> 24 Oct 1918, RECO1/752.

<sup>49</sup> See Hollis [1979: 15-22] for some nineteenth century descriptions.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Vickery [1993]; Wahrman [1993]; Steedman [1994].

<sup>51</sup> For a general discussion see Harris [1994], p.89-95; more specifically Jalland [1988] and Caine [1986] on middle-class marriages. See also Thane [1990(a): 182] on working-class marriages; she points out that the 'argument that formal marriage was promoted by working-class women as a source of security, as expanding capitalism forced them into increasing dependency..' did not account for working-men's enthusiasm for marriage.

<sup>52</sup> Phyllis Rose [1984] offers examples, and which individually contain aspects, of both views; and the easy acceptance of children's presence among the adults in the Campbell family that so impressed Princess Louise [Wake, 1988: 151-2] has to be balanced against Blanche Dugdale's observation that '...the neglect of hygiene and diet in this ducal household of the 'sixties would appal any modern Medical Officer of Health.' [1940: 38]. For other studies of Victorian marriage see Doggett [1992] and Hammerton [1992].

middle-class families was rarely segregated; even when a tutor was hired to prepare boys for their departure to school, girls frequently joined in the lessons, and a succession of small brothers could ensure that an older girl received at least an introduction to mathematics and the classics.<sup>53</sup> That could often lead to some frustrations; the younger Campbell daughters had a very patchy education, while as the only daughter and the youngest child in her father's second family, Elizabeth Haldane was seen to be too boyish and had difficulty in adjusting to the classes with girls to which she was sent at the age of ten. She saw herself as more independent than many of her companions and obviously rebelled against many of the conventions for young girls:

I wanted to do for myself and not just to be the helper of others who were doing - a quite unbiblical ideal for any woman to have.<sup>54</sup>

The bonds between brothers and sisters could often be strong, and the habits of writing home during their early schooldays continued into adult life. The personal correspondence of many politicians reveals the extent to which mothers, and more often sisters, were given information about and returned comments on, Government business or other parliamentary and political matters.<sup>55</sup> In large families such letters were often passed around for other family members to add their views, inspiring further correspondence.<sup>56</sup>

Parental attitudes were also important; although individuals varied in their ideas about the education of their daughters, in general the prevailing view was that there was little point in continuing a girl's formal education beyond what could be provided by a governess.<sup>57</sup> However, most parents believed in the importance of ensuring that a young woman was able to converse sensibly on cultural and political matters, if only for the purpose of

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<sup>53</sup> The Balfour sisters Eleanor, Evelyn and Alice all studied these subjects with their brothers.

<sup>54</sup> Haldane [1937: 15]. See also Jalland [1988:15-16] on women's self-education.

<sup>55</sup> For example, James Bryce, Austen Chamberlain, Herbert Gladstone, Alfred Lyttelton, R.B. Haldane, Arthur and Gerald Balfour.

<sup>56</sup> The practice was widespread between the Lytteltons, Talbots, and Gladstones as Jalland [1988: 195] has pointed out. Louise Creighton mentioned the extensive letter writing between members of her family who were not physically demonstrative, 'but in letters there was a great deal of confession of affection and of love of home and home people..'. [Covert, 1994: 24]

<sup>57</sup> See Fletcher [1997] for Lord Lyttelton's contradictory attitude to female education; he was a keen supporter of the extension of higher education for women, yet his own daughters were educated by governesses.

interesting potential husbands. Others went further; few mothers in the mid-Victorian period were as insistent as Lady Blanche Balfour that their daughters should be given a comprehensive education,<sup>58</sup> although this was changing. Mary Scharlieb, like Eleanor Balfour born in 1845, recorded that her stepmother was insistent that she have a good education.<sup>59</sup> For other women it was their fathers' interest or influence that was important in their education and subsequent political or professional interests. Many of the women studied here were educated by their fathers,<sup>60</sup> and their subsequent public or political roles lend substantial credence to the claim that a father's support is one of the key factors in determining a woman's career.<sup>61</sup>

Many women continued to find close companionship when they married, while others may have experienced it for the first time. Beatrice Webb celebrated her marriage to Sidney as a partnership, and this was no less true for other couples, at least one of whom were influenced by the Webbs' example when discussing their own future life together. In her discussion of the extensive correspondence between Shena Potter and her future husband, Ernest Simon, Joan Simon notes that 'It was in Webbian terms that the two arrived at a large measure of agreement on the guiding principles of their life ...'.<sup>62</sup>

Husbands and wives frequently shared interests such as reading,<sup>63</sup> or membership of philanthropic, learned, or political associations,<sup>64</sup> and these were often important in the development or enhancement of women's

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<sup>58</sup> See Oppenheim [1995] for a discussion of Lady Blanche's influence on her children, especially Eleanor, who later married Henry Sidgwick.

<sup>59</sup> Scharlieb [1924].

<sup>60</sup> Among the many who were educated in this way, and for whom the importance of this influence was cited either by themselves or by their biographers, were May Tennant, Sophie Bryant, Gertrude Tuckwell, and Margaret Tuke.

<sup>61</sup> See Banks [1990(a): 28]; Caine [1994].

<sup>62</sup> Simon, [1986: II, 17].

<sup>63</sup> Lucy Cavendish's diary entries regularly listed her comments on books she and her husband had read to one another; when apart they would often read the same book and compare notes - a practice that was common in their extended family circle. Louise Creighton learned Italian through reading Dante with her husband. [Letter to her mother, 1 Aug 1873, Creighton Mss.]

<sup>64</sup> Helen Dendy and Bernard Bosanquet met through the Charity Organisation Society; the Sidgwicks were members of the Society for Psychical Research; Eleanor and Alfred Barton were Co-operators; the Snowdens, members of the International Labour Party. Beatrice Potter and Sidney Webb met through their shared interest in socialism, as did Shena Potter and Ernest Simon.

political and general education.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, they often resulted in friendships with like-minded couples, and there are often references in various accounts to the form of such friendships: dinner parties, holidays, weekend visits, joint attendance at conferences or meetings of learned societies. Such contacts went beyond the social in their entirely acceptable exploitation for political or professional purposes, and offer a contrast to the picture often presented of men congregating in their clubs while their wives were occupied with domestic duties.

Women's assistance to their husbands often led to a more direct political involvement, although many wives preferred a less public role. Lucy Lyttelton was passionately interested in politics, but does not seem to have expressed frustration at the life assigned to her by her upbringing in one political family and by her marriage, to Lord Frederick Cavendish, into another; indeed, apart from her grief at their childlessness, she was clearly content to support his work. She wrote out speeches for him, helped him with correspondence, and canvassed for him and Gladstone. She had a strong interest in the promotion of girls' education<sup>66</sup> and after her husband's death<sup>67</sup> was offered the position of Mistress of Girton but refused, writing to her cousin, Mary Gladstone that 'Dear Freddy wd. wish me rather to be useful in quiet natural ways'.<sup>68</sup>

When Louise von Glehn married Mandell Creighton in 1872 she had little interest in social or political matters and was an ecclesiastical, rather than a political wife, but during the early years of her marriage she followed a course of study directed by her husband, combining this with various forms of social work. She began to write for publication in 1873, producing a number of reviews, and a translation of von Ranke.<sup>69</sup> She became a prolific writer, producing over 40 books and pamphlets, as well as editing her husband's sermons and essays after his death in 1901.

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<sup>65</sup> See Caine [1994] for an account of the 'feminist' thinking of John Stuart Mill, Henry Fawcett and Henry Sidgwick, as well as for their influence on their respective wives' knowledge of political economy.

<sup>66</sup> She supported a number of educational organisations, including the Girls' Public Day School Trust.

<sup>67</sup> He was killed by Fenians just after his appointment as Irish Chief Secretary in May 1882.

<sup>68</sup> 9 July 1884, Gladstone Mss. 46235, f.227.

<sup>69</sup> The work had been passed on to her by her husband, who had been commissioned to translate a chapter of von Ranke's *History of England*, although her work was not formally acknowledged: the British Library catalogue entry for the volume lists Mandell Creighton.

Her social work was largely undertaken out of duty, although there were periods when she enjoyed it,<sup>70</sup> and her real interest was in debate and organisation. She was a leading member of the National Union of Working Women,<sup>71</sup> and was elected its president several times. This enabled her to continue and increase contacts with leading politicians and churchmen made during her husband's lifetime. She presided over the NUWW at a time when it was increasing in political influence, and held many committee appointments; she was the only woman during the period to serve on two Royal Commissions. Her public work also had personal importance in that it enabled her to meet and make friends with other women, and such friendships equally provided her with opportunities to exchange views and information. She and Kathleen Lyttelton<sup>72</sup> formed a ladies dining club at Cambridge in 1890, which continued to meet until 1914;<sup>73</sup> she was also instrumental in the formation of women's groups among the wives of churchmen which held their own meetings during Church Congresses and other ecclesiastical gatherings.<sup>74</sup>

Caroline Bridgeman took an active part in her husband's political

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<sup>70</sup> Covert, [1994: 57 and 63].

<sup>71</sup> Discussed in more detail below, pp. 93-94.

<sup>72</sup> Like Louise Creighton, a leading member of the NUWW; she was married to Lucy Cavendish's brother Arthur, and a colleague and friend of Millicent Fawcett and Frances Balfour in the NUWSS. See also her correspondence with her sister-in-law and close friend Edith Lyttelton for examples of female [though not strictly feminist] solidarity and sympathy. [Chandos Mss.] Several of the Lyttelton wives, unlike the Lyttelton sisters, supported women's suffrage and were generally more radical than their sisters-in-law; see Fletcher [1997] for the conservatism of Lord Lyttelton's daughters. Lady Betty Balfour noted that the three Balfour sisters [Eleanor, Evelyn and Alice] were 'all reluctant to take active part in the fight. [for women's suffrage] They mustn't compromise the precious brothers, & they must never be tarred with the militant brush.' [Lady Betty Balfour, note n.d. 1912, Balfour Mss., GD/433/2/344]. She and Lady Frances Balfour [the sisters-in-law] were active suffragists.

<sup>73</sup> For another account of this see Ethel Sidgwick [1938: 115] who lists the other members of the club.

<sup>74</sup> She took a key role in the organisation of the 1908 Pan-Anglican Conference when she brought together a number of prominent women social reformers, both in separate meetings concentrating on issues that specifically concerned women, and in joint sessions throughout the whole Congress.



career;<sup>75</sup> was praised by Chamberlain for her local canvassing;<sup>76</sup> and went on to become a notable public figure in her own right. She was an early supporter of separate women's associations in the Conservative Party, but was also involved in its central association and was the first woman to be elected Chairman of the Party in 1926. She was invited to stand for her husband's seat when he resigned in 1928, but did not do so, apparently preferring to join him in his retirement. It was a reflection of the strength of a dynastic tradition in politics that wives, or more frequently widows, were seen as successors to their husband's parliamentary or council seats, and during the 1920s many of the women in my survey attained or sought public office in this way.<sup>77</sup> Lady Emmott unsuccessfully stood for Parliament in her husband's former constituency after he had given up Government office;<sup>78</sup> while Anna Mathew took her husband's place on the London County Council after his death in 1923, and Margaret Wintringham succeeded her husband as Liberal MP for Louth in 1921.

For other women marriage provided no companionship or shared interests; they often had little involvement in their husbands' careers, and their own public work provided opportunities for outside friendship as well as its more obvious strategic results. Lady Frances Balfour, like Lucy Cavendish, was fascinated by politics and had married from one political

<sup>75</sup> W.C. Bridgeman [1864-1935], Conservative MP for North Shropshire 1906-29; he held various ministerial offices and became Home Secretary in the 1922-24 Government and was first Lord of the Admiralty 1924-29.

<sup>76</sup> Chamberlain saw women's influence as important in the the campaign for tariff reform, and commended Mrs Bridgeman's personal visits to individual working families in her husband's constituency: 'I am sure that the misrepresentations of the Free Traders can only be adequately met by following them into every cottage ...'. [Letter to W.C. Bridgeman, 8 Dec 1904, Bridgeman Mss.4629/1/1904/21.] The existence of women's tariff associations is noted in Lovenduski et al [1994], but their impact on the Conservative Party is not considered in most histories; see, in particular, Green [1995] where women are omitted from an otherwise exhaustive examination of the tariff reform crisis. For a discussion of Conservative attitudes and policies towards women voters in the 1920s see Jarvis [1994] although he underestimates the importance of such women as Caroline Bridgeman and Mary Maxse in the prewar party structure on which the 1920s propagandists built their campaigns.

<sup>77</sup> For women M.P.s see B. Harrison, 1986, especially p.625-6, although it should also be noted that men as well as women inherited seats, a practice which was more frequent before the twentieth century. For twentieth century examples, see Butler & Butler [1994: 180-81], who also list 14 cases in which women took over their husbands' seats and 13 cases of filial succession, two of which were women [p.182-83].

<sup>78</sup> Florence Bell was nominated for her husband's Newcastle East seat by his Union, the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, but in a procedural dispute, which echoes some recent selection disputes, her nomination was over-ruled and Arthur Henderson was installed as the candidate. [See reports in the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 19 and 23 Dec 1922.]

family into another, but her husband, Eustace, was an architect and Lady Frances found more in common with his brothers. Her diaries and letters rarely mention her husband, but there are frequent references to her conversations and arguments with Gerald and Arthur. Margaret Mackworth and Mary Hamilton belonged to a slightly later generation and had a less elite background. Both had independent careers before and during their marriages. Their autobiographies do little more than record the fact of their husbands' existence; Mary Hamilton described her marriage as unwise, and her husband and mother-in-law as 'wholly without kindness'. [1953: 15]<sup>79</sup>

These brief examples demonstrate no specific correlation between family circumstances and the nature of political activity, although they do indicate that families mattered, whether their effects were positive or negative. Of the women discussed above, only Mary Hamilton could be described as having no family connections with political life, which she entered as a student member of the Independent Labour Party.

Throughout the period family networks continued to provide strong networks of political information. The political world was a small one: women from the leading political families met and conversed during a London season, which was defined around the sittings of Parliament, continuing their correspondence by visits and letters, and increasingly from the 1880s, in the activities of their own political organisations, such as the Women's Liberal Federation, Women's Labour League, and the Primrose League.<sup>80</sup> They could thus combine their traditional supportive role with a more pro-active one; for example, Lady Frances Balfour who, with her sister-in-law Lady Betty Balfour, formed the centre of an extensive network passing information to, from and within the Balfour, Cecil and Lytton families and the various political associations to which they belonged. Such women had an interest in politics that went far beyond the trivial one that is sometimes

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<sup>79</sup> See also Hetherington [1989: 54-55] for her suggestion that the Duchess of Atholl used and increased her public work in order to combat the distress caused by her husband's infidelities, and Banks [1990(a)] for Lady Denman whose public involvement increased as she became more estranged from her husband.

<sup>80</sup> For the Primrose League and other Conservative women's organisations see above. For the Women's Liberal Federation see Walker [1987], and Mills [1986]; and for the Women's Labour League, Christine Collette [1989].

imputed to them,<sup>81</sup> and, whether or not they were supporters of women's suffrage, had a strong belief in class-based political representation, allied in many cases to an equally strong commitment to the improvement of living and working conditions for all.

## 2. Professional and Educational Networks

In order to be chosen to serve on a Government committee a woman had to have achieved some political or professional standing, broadly defined. Social standing alone, or membership of a political family was not enough in itself to confer such status, although clearly there was an element of circularity here, since women who had such a background were likely to have political interests. For example, the extended families of the Lytteltons and Balfours contained many members who had no political involvement, and there is no evidence that social eminence was the sole determinant of committee appointments of women from these and similar families. Eleanor Sidgwick, Frances Balfour, Lucy Cavendish, Edith Lyttelton and Meriel Talbot had achieved considerable reputations for their expertise and experience in various forms of social and political work,<sup>82</sup> as well as being noted for their committee skills.<sup>83</sup> Catherine Marshall's 1915 prescription for desirable qualities in women appointed to committees was arguing after the fact. In her notes on the appointment of women to organise women's employment in munitions work, she recommended that they should be representative with no

...Duchesses, Lady Bountifuls, nor wives on their husbands' merits... and with practical knowledge of public work ... Not figure-heads:- the Secretaries not the Presidents...<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> For example, the description of Lady Frances as a 'political groupie' in Ridley and Percy [1992: 27]; and Beatrice Webb's description of Lady Betty as a woman whose 'whole life .. is centred in admiration for her famous brother-in-law ..' [*Diaries*, 26 April 1915; Mackenzie, 1984: 224], which ignores her role in local government [she was a local Councillor and a JP], and as a leading suffrage campaigner primarily working with the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association. See also Banks [1990(a)] for a less prejudiced assessment of Lady Betty.

<sup>82</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>83</sup> Eleanor Sidgwick described committees as providing 'pleasant opportunities for getting to know people..' [Ethel Sidgwick, 1938: 123], see also 123 ff. for examples of her effectiveness as a committee member. See also correspondence between members of the Lyttelton and Gladstone families for Lucy Cavendish's strengths as a committee member; for example, Lavinia Talbot to Mary Gladstone, 7 July 1884, Gladstone Mss. 46236, f.223.

<sup>84</sup> 'Private Notes re Employment of Women on Munitions Work', n.d.; sent to Frances Stevenson c.22 July 1915. [Lloyd George Mss. D/11/2/7]

The women appointed to committees up to this time were known for their interest and commitment to some form of public work,<sup>85</sup> which invariably related to matters concerning women and children, and there had been [and continued to be] relatively fewer female than male committee members from the nobility.<sup>86</sup>

Family and friendship networks were important for the political and professional work of men and women alike; women activists found friendship through their shared and various aims, and used it, as they used family contacts, to further those aims.<sup>87</sup> Friendship has institutional as well as private forms, and can be created and maintained through educational and professional links. Until the late nineteenth century these were largely confined to men, although women were involved in many philanthropic societies;<sup>88</sup> and some of the groups concerned with social investigation, the collection of statistics, and social or political reform.<sup>89</sup> By the end of the century women graduates, and others with a common interest in such fields as health and housing, were beginning to form associations in the same ways as men. In some cases that involved attempts to become members of male professional associations, such as the British Medical Association,<sup>90</sup> which were invariably resisted, leaving women isolated, but more visible in

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<sup>85</sup> Despite the comments made about Lady Birchenough, which implied that she was only chosen for her social position, she also had a strong record of charitable work and was a noted writer.

<sup>86</sup> During the whole period only three Duchesses were appointed [Atholl, Marlborough and Bedford: see appendix], all of whom were active in various aspects of social and political reform.

<sup>87</sup> Friendship networks between women have been examined by Levine [1992] as examples of feminist solidarity, and although there may be some examples of this, it is not a model that fits easily with the group of women discussed here, although some of the women who served on committees may have described themselves as feminist, for example, Shena Simon or Margaret Mackworth. For many women, particularly in the post-1918 period, feminism was equated with the fight for the suffrage, and they drew a distinction between that campaign and those which were pushing for industrial or social reforms. See for example, the passage quoted from Gertrude Tuckwell [1981] on p. 76.

<sup>88</sup> See the earlier discussion in this chapter and also Annan [1955].

<sup>89</sup> For a discussion of women's involvement in such groups see for example, Yeo [1996] especially chapters 5 and 6; also Hall [1992] chapter 6. Both note the ways in which women's participation was marginalised, or at best separated, from that of men, although this was not always a simple gender discrimination. As Caine [1997:16] notes, the participation of middle-class men in civic activity had increased during the early nineteenth century, and was still recent enough for them to resist sharing it with women.

<sup>90</sup> See Witz [1992: 99-101] for a brief account of the history of women's admission to the BMA and to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons.

their own segregated professional groupings. Many of these began as associations of philanthropic workers who became partly or wholly professionalised over time; for example, the women who had trained with Octavia Hill as rent collectors and property managers formed the Association of Women Housing Workers in 1914.<sup>91</sup> Successive issues of the *Englishwoman's Year Book* give some indication of the range and numbers of such societies and these were increasingly able to make claims for representation on committees.

Women were informed of each other's work through a huge number of journals and periodicals, which catered exclusively for a female readership. Such publications contained the articles on society, fashion and household matters that increasingly became typical of women's magazines, but there were also regular features on political and social issues, in which the social had a very different definition. *The Queen* had a parliamentary column, whimsically headed 'A Peep at Parliament' but this and other sections gave serious coverage to legislation concerning women. That journal and others, such as *Woman* or *Hearth and Home*, published interviews with women in public life; announcements of their significant achievements and appointments;<sup>92</sup> and reports on the activities of women's organisations such as the Women's Industrial Council, or temperance or educational associations. These publications and many daily newspapers also covered the annual meetings of the National Union of Working Women whose importance as a forum for discussion of and information on women's public work was widely recognised by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup>

During the late nineteenth century women also began to establish clubs: some, like the Alexandra, were designed only to provide congenial meeting places with food and accommodation for women visiting London; while others were formed around particular intellectual or political interests. The University Club was founded in 1887 with a limit of 300 members, all of whom were required to be holders of a degree or other recognised diploma, while the Somerville Club was formed for professional women for the '... encouragement .. of [their] interest in political and social problems..'

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<sup>91</sup> For an account of the Association and its subsequent changes, see Upcott [1962].

<sup>92</sup> For example, *Hearth and Home* noted the appointment of Flora Shaw as the Colonial Editor of *The Times* [21 Sept 1893, p.680].

<sup>93</sup> See Section 4 of this chapter.

although it was not identified with any political party.<sup>94</sup> Such clubs could hardly rival those of men; the *Englishwoman's Year Book* recorded 24 women's clubs in London in 1899,<sup>95</sup> and although some of the women's clubs admitted men, and there were a few mixed clubs, like the Sesame or the Albemarle, women were excluded from the most influential men's clubs. Many of the women in this study belonged to the Thirty Club whose membership was restricted to women who were distinguished in public life.<sup>96</sup>

Women's access to university education was increasing during this period, and women's colleges provided former students with networks and information through regular meetings and the publication of yearbooks or newsletters.<sup>97</sup> Women who had attended the same school or college were not necessarily friends, but their shared educational backgrounds or memories<sup>98</sup> established additional connections when they subsequently met as co-workers or committee members.<sup>99</sup> Before the Great War only three of the 16 women appointed to Royal Commissions had a university degree or professional qualification; between 1914 and 1929 the numbers rose to 17 out of 23. Taking the narrower criterion of a university education, of the 39 women Commissioners appointed between 1894 and 1930, 15 had a university education; and of these, eight<sup>100</sup> had been at Newnham.<sup>101</sup>

Reba Soffer [1992] has argued that the dominant ethos of Newnham

<sup>94</sup> *The Queen*, 11 Nov 1893, p.801.

<sup>95</sup> See also *The Queen* whose weekly series on ladies' clubs ran throughout the early years of the 1890s; and Anstruther [1899]. Martha Vicinus gives a brief account of some clubs, pointing out their class distinctions and their general lack of popularity among women. [1985: 295-99] The number of women's clubs was small compared to that of men's, especially if working-men's clubs are included. For a nineteenth century account of 100 of the most popular men's clubs see Timbs [1866].

<sup>96</sup> Among them were Gertrude Tuckwell, Elizabeth Haldane, Violet Markham, and Lucy Deane. Miss Tuckwell wrote that Violet Markham had proposed her for the club, which 'numbered many distinguished women at that time'. [1981, *Reminiscences*, A/340.]

<sup>97</sup> School networks also grew as girls' public schools gained in prestige and popularity and sent more pupils to universities. Many women among the minority who successfully completed a university course had also attended the same schools, for example the North London Collegiate, St Leonard's, or the Cheltenham Ladies College.

<sup>98</sup> A growing body of girls' school stories also helped to create an ethos of female support and friendship. Many books also celebrated the independent careers of the teachers in such schools. See Cadogan and Craig [1986].

<sup>99</sup> Many might also have been related or have known each other through family friendships.

<sup>100</sup> Seven were students; the eighth was Eleanor Sidgwick, the College's second principal.

<sup>101</sup> Three of the remainder had studied at the University of London; with two each at Girton and Somerville.

College, in its early years, was not to develop education for women as women, but to encourage in them an ideal of public service. Soffer compares this to the parallel and more established tradition at Balliol where Benjamin Jowett, like Eleanor Sidgwick at Newnham, became mythic figures to their own and successive generations of students. They both created colleges that connected higher education to an ethos of national obligation and both identified their tenures with the broad world of new scholarship and the narrow world of effective power.<sup>102</sup>

As Soffer points out, the careers of early Newnham students bore little comparison to those of their Balliol counterparts; Eleanor Sidgwick undertook a number of surveys of her former students and found that of those who took up paid work, most went into teaching.<sup>103</sup> However, although Soffer is less concerned to trace the working lives of Newnham students than to establish the centrality of Mrs Sidgwick's views on women's education in the formation of the College's guiding principles, it is clear that they did achieve some success as civil servants, as well as achieving membership of advisory committees through their eminence in a range of other professions.

This suggests that Newnham students had followed careers [whether paid or unpaid] that had strong connections to the social policy issues investigated by Royal Commissions; it also supports Soffer's point about the strength of the College's public service ethos, and its personification in Mrs Sidgwick, as well as the points made in the introduction and chapter 1 about precedent and tradition in committee appointments. The proportion of former Newnham students appointed to other Government committees, apart from Royal Commissions, was also relatively high, as was their incidence in higher grade civil service posts,<sup>104</sup> indicating that over time the College was successful in producing a higher number of public servants

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<sup>102</sup> Soffer [1992: 193].

<sup>103</sup> See also Gordon [1895].

<sup>104</sup> Mona Wilson who left Newnham in 1896 was the highest-ranking and highest paid woman civil servant of her generation. [See *TheTimes*, 30 Oct 1954, p.8]

than other comparable women's colleges.<sup>105</sup> That success was created and reinforced through the power of precedent, in that those who controlled the appointments to paid and advisory positions followed patterns of association and analogy.<sup>106</sup> The first women's appointments to committees were thus important in establishing such patterns, and the dominance of Newnham, the Association of Head Mistresses, and the Women's Trade Union League through successive advisory committees owed as much to the early establishment of official familiarity with these institutions as to the undoubted competence of the individual women who were chosen.<sup>107</sup>

The connections produced through women's increased higher education were institutionalised by those that arose from their careers. There were several associations for women teachers, and the influential Association of Head Mistresses, founded in 1874 by Miss Buss and Miss Beale, provided a large number of women committee members.<sup>108</sup> The Women's Trade Union League<sup>109</sup> brought together women who were in paid professional employment, as well as those who worked more directly for the League as union organisers.<sup>110</sup> Its president from 1886 until 1904 was Lady Emilia Dilke, wife of the Liberal politician Sir Charles Dilke, both of whom shared a commitment to social and political reform. At its foundation the League had been opposed to the legislation of women's trades, insisting

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<sup>105</sup> See also Martha Vicinus who argues that the Newnham version of public service was a distinctly feminine one, citing the high numbers of Newnham students who joined the Settlement movement, and who continued with this voluntary service, while Girton students had a 'more perfunctory' involvement and male graduates used the movement as step to a civil service career. [1985: 214-15 and 221-22.] The absence of any detailed research into the career patterns of early Cambridge women students makes wider comparisons difficult, but my own research suggests that women graduates were more likely to use the women's trade union movement as a route to professional work in the civil service; for example, M. Wilson, C. Rackham and M. Symons all held office in the WTUL before their civil service employment.

<sup>106</sup> See here Douglas [1987: 65-6] whose discussion on the institutionalisation of analogy offers a convincing framework for analysis of British Government administration.

<sup>107</sup> For example, the appointment of Blanche Clough to the Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge, rather than her Girton counterpart, Miss Katharine Jex-Blake.

<sup>108</sup> See Lee Holcombe [1973: 52-65; 96-102] for women's professional associations in teaching and nursing respectively; Copelman [1996] for London teachers. J.S. Pedersen [1975-76 and 1981] has indicated the influence of the Headmistresses Associations on educational policy, although she did not register the institutional importance of its representation on successive Government committees, especially the Consultative Committee on Education.

<sup>109</sup> See above for details of the League's foundation, p. 58, n. 32.

<sup>110</sup> See Deborah Thom [1986] for a discussion of the involvement and motivations of middle-class women in the organisation of women's unionism.



that it was only through organisation within all women unions that pay and conditions could be improved.<sup>111</sup> However, it had always supported and campaigned for women factory inspectors,<sup>112</sup> and many of the women who were appointed to the inspectorate were members of the League.

One of its most prominent members was May Abraham [Tennant], who also dominates the history of women committee members; she was the first woman ever to be appointed to an advisory committee [the Departmental Committee on Lucifer Match Works in 1893] and thereafter served on many Government committees. She was the honorary treasurer of the WTUL from 1888 until 1891;<sup>113</sup> a position she combined with that of paid secretary to Lady Dilke, as she had very little family income.<sup>114</sup> However, as McFeely [1988: 5] has pointed out, lack of money did not mean a lack of contacts: through the Dilkes she knew many leading Government figures; and her biographer noted that her circle of friends also included many from the socialist and labour movements, for example, Keir Hardie and Ben Tillett.<sup>115</sup> She shared a flat with Gertrude Tuckwell, Lady Dilke's niece, who also worked for the WTUL, and who was later to serve on many Government committees.

The Dilkes' London house provided a congenial meeting place for a wide range of people interested in social reform, and they were particularly supportive of women, both through such informal contacts and through Sir Charles' parliamentary, and Lady Dilke's trades union work. Sir Charles supported bills in favour of women's suffrage; was one of the strongest campaigners for the introduction of Trade Boards; and, when he was

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<sup>111</sup> For a brief but comprehensive account of the history of protective legislation at this period see Jane Lewis and Celia Davies [1991]. Sonya Rose has written on the gender implications of this issue in relation to male trades unionism [1992], but its effects within and between women's organisations have been less discussed. For example, it was a major source of hostility between May Tennant and Margaret Irwin. Margaret Irwin's account of their dispute can be found in her letters to Margaret MacDonald [MacDonald Mss., PRO/30/69]; see also PRO.RECO1/746.

<sup>112</sup> The League had begun its campaign at the 1878 Trades Union Congress [to which women were first admitted in 1875]; see *TUC Reports*, 1878 and 1879, also Emma Paterson's summary: 'Women as Inspectors of Factories and Workshops', *Women's Union Journal*, June 1882, p.46-7.

<sup>113</sup> In 1891 she began her career in Government service, see footnote 114, below.

<sup>114</sup> At the time of her appointment to the Home Office she had been working as an Assistant Commissioner for the Royal Commission on Labour at a salary of £20 a month. [See letter from Treasury to Home Office: PRO.T1/8675B/15072.] As a factory inspector she was paid £200 a year - £100 less than her male colleagues. [See McFeely, 1988: 25]

<sup>115</sup> Markham [1949:18-19].

President of the Local Government Board [1882-85], appointed several women as Poor Law Inspectors in 1883.<sup>116</sup> Gertrude Tuckwell's account was strongly partisan, but her description of Lady Dilke's inspirational enthusiasm was confirmed by others. The following passage is Miss Tuckwell's description of her aunt's views on the legal and economic disabilities of women, and can be seen as a framework for the views of many of the young women who knew Lady Dilke.

I think it was her consistent policy to keep men and women together in this as in all great industrial struggles [that] kept us all out of the purely Feminist movements. She spoke then of the grievous burdens laid on the industrial classes, and of sweating in the home and factory, burdens too heavy to be borne. She turned to Trades Unionism as the great immediate means in which she saw her panacea of helping people to help themselves, and linked that struggle to the whole struggle for equality of opportunity in her aim of giving the chance of fullness of life to all. Practical work was really linked to great ideals.<sup>117</sup>

Lucy Deane referred to the importance of her contacts with the Dilke circle and the WTUL in her work as a factory inspector, and like other young women in the group, looked on Lady Dilke as an adviser.<sup>118</sup> The Dilkes were at the centre of a social and political network which brought together people across class divides, and overlapped with, and complemented, the family networks mentioned earlier. Beatrice Webb disliked the Dilkes on moral and political grounds: her account of their lavish entertaining at Trades Union Congresses reflected both her distaste for such excess, and for what she saw as their attempts to reclaim their social position through a disregard of 'righteousness'.<sup>119</sup> However, even she was forced to concede that Lady

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<sup>116</sup> See Ensor [1992: 130]; and references above to Sir James Stansfeld.

<sup>117</sup> G. Tuckwell, *Reminiscences*, p.29, typescript in Tuckwell Papers, Supplementary File A.

<sup>118</sup> See also Tuckwell [1931: 15 ff.] on Constance Smith, and Rose Squire [1927: 25]. Lady Emmott was another young woman who visited the Dilkes despite the scandal attached to their name. Her daughter remembered annual weekend visits to stay with the Dilkes of which Lady Emmott '...recalled that it was supposed to be something of a declaration to take ... two teenage daughters to stay there regularly...'. [Notes of a conversation with Mrs Dorothy Barlow recorded by Joan Simon. (Emmott Mss., Nuffield College)]

<sup>119</sup> Sir Charles Dilke had been involved in a notorious divorce case in 1886. It is often claimed that this ruined his career, and while it was true that he was not given further ministerial office, and lost his parliamentary seat in the election of August 1886, he was re-elected in 1892 and continued to be close to many influential politicians, and the Prince of Wales [although friendship with the latter was hardly likely to appease Mrs Webb's moral sensibilities]. See Jenkins [1965] or Nicholls [1994].

Dilke had one good feature:

...the pretty secretary is devoted to her, so are all the women with whom she is connected in the Trade Union movement ...<sup>120</sup>

After Lady Dilke's death in 1904, Gertrude Tuckwell was appointed President of the WTUL, which retained its influence as an established institution to be consulted in matters concerning women's employment, particularly after the formation of a Liberal Government in 1905. The League's journal, the *Women's Trade Union Review* carried regular features, called 'Parliamentary Notes' or 'Legislative Notes', on employment measures affecting women, which kept members up to date with the progress of relevant bills or committees. The *Review* reflected League policy by focusing on employment and labour issues; it did not engage in the wider debates about women's franchise,<sup>121</sup> and although it advocated the appointment of women to Government committees and their inclusion as witnesses, it did so only on specific labour matters. That was a major difference between the League and the Women's Industrial Council, formed in 1894, and whose Parliamentary and Legal Committee had the explicit aim of ensuring '...the election of women to various public bodies, and in their appointment to public offices...'.<sup>122</sup>

Many WTUL members belonged to other women's organisations and such joint memberships were important in bringing to prominence a group of women who depended on that inter-connection both to inform themselves, and to lobby Governments through various means, including encouraging the appointment of women to committees. There were policy differences between the WTUL, the Women's Industrial Council, the National Federation of Working Women,<sup>123</sup> but the same women often attended their respective meetings and were members of their executives.<sup>124</sup> They also all had

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<sup>120</sup> B. Webb, *Diaries*, 18 Sept 1889, [Mackenzie 1982 :294].

<sup>121</sup> The *WTUR* declared that their position on the suffrage was that it was 'outside the League's province' and they could take no action on it. This led them to refuse an invitation from the Women's Co-operative Guild to send a speaker to a suffrage demonstration at the Guild's Annual Congress. [No. 58, July 1905, p.9]

<sup>122</sup> *Women's Industrial News*, 1(2), November 1895.

<sup>123</sup> These were largely over the extent to which women's work should be controlled by legislation.

<sup>124</sup> For example, Mary Macarthur worked for the WTUL, co-founded the NFWW, and often lectured for the WIC.

contacts with the women factory inspectors, and the investigation section of the Board of Trade whose chief woman officer from 1903 to 1917, Clara Collet [formerly a member of the WTUL], frequently made use of their various investigations into women's labour and earnings.<sup>125</sup> Like Collet herself, several of the most successful women civil servants during the early decades of the twentieth century began their careers as paid or voluntary workers for one or other of these groups.<sup>126</sup>

### 3. Political Parties

The family and professional connections described above gave women various forms of political information that were intensified through their membership of political parties as well as through the many suffrage associations. Women's party political allegiances became much more obvious with the creation of separate associations for them within existing parties, although during the closing decades of the nineteenth century only the Women's Co-operative Guild and the Women's Liberal Federation had any real independent institutional existence, rather than being merely adjuncts to men's associations. The Primrose League had a separate women's section, but this was not organised around distinctive campaigns on issues concerning women.<sup>127</sup> There were some women's groups within the Independent Labour Party, but, as Clare Collins [1991] has noted, the Party's theoretical admission of women on the same terms as men tended to limit their opportunities, but their subsidiary status within the Liberal and Conservative Parties permitted them to form strong women's associations.<sup>128</sup>

The Women's Co-operative Guild was not a political party, but its

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<sup>125</sup> She also maintained contacts with Women's Co-operative Guild, which provided her with material from its surveys; see WCG Reports, 1894 and 1895.

<sup>126</sup> For example, Mona Wilson had joined the WTUL soon after leaving Newnham and was its Secretary from 1899-1902; and Lilian Clapham, who became a women's officer in the Ministry of Labour was involved with the WIC and the Women's University Settlement. This has some parallels with the progression of male settlement workers into the civil service, for example William Beveridge and Hubert Llewellyn Smith. See Vicinus [1985: 215] and Bulmer et al [1991: 24-25]. This was less true for women settlement workers in Britain, although, as Kathryn Kish Sklar [1995: 204-5] points out, settlement work provided a catalyst and a focus for political activism among many middle-class women in the USA. Fifteen of the women in appendix 1, for whom such information could be traced, had worked in settlements.

<sup>127</sup> See Walker [1987]; Lovenduski et al [1994]; and Robb [1942], the latter is one of the most detailed histories of the League.

<sup>128</sup> See also Walker [1987]; and the quotation from Mrs H.G. Reid cited in Robb [1942: 9] for a contemporary Liberal assessment of the force of the Primrose League.

campaigns became increasingly political as it became more involved in the fight for women's suffrage. It was formed in 1884 primarily as an educational group, to spread knowledge of co-operation and to improve conditions for women.<sup>129</sup> It was less concerned with promoting the appointment of women to Government committees than with the representation of their views to inquiries on specific subjects, and its members frequently gave evidence to committees. It also provided inquiries with survey information; for example, for the women's housing committees of the Ministry of Reconstruction.<sup>130</sup> Eleanor Barton was a leading member of the Guild and gave evidence on its behalf to a number of Government committees [including the Royal Commission on Divorce], before becoming one of the most frequently appointed women to serve on such committees, when she was usually described as representing working women.<sup>131</sup>

The Women's Liberal Federation and the Women's Liberal Unionist Association [for those who did not support Home Rule] were formed in 1886 to co-ordinate the work of existing local associations in the promotion of Liberal thought and policy. The Federation was split again in 1892<sup>132</sup> over the issue of women's suffrage; those Associations that supported the extension of the local and national franchise to women stayed with the Federation, and the Women's National Liberal Association was established to incorporate those groups that believed that women should restrict themselves to local matters and that national government should be left to men.<sup>133</sup> The WNLA supported and was supported by the National Liberal Federation, the central party organisation from which women were excluded, while the WLF, despite its name, did not give unconditional support to the National Federation. Both the WLF and the WNLA pledged

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<sup>129</sup> There are a number of accounts of the Guild and its work: see, for example, Naomi Black [1989]; and Siao-Mei Djang [1930].

<sup>130</sup> See below, chapter 4. Pat Thane [1993: 365] also discusses the impact of the WCG and the WLL on housing policy and other aspects of Labour women's involvement in the formation of early 20th century British social policy. See also her chapter in Beck and Thane [eds.], 1991.

<sup>131</sup> See Mona Wilson's suggestions for the membership of a committee to discuss the retraining of women workers after World War 1 [RECO1/749: 5079, 20 March 1918]. There was much discussion of the need for the representation of working women towards the end of the war, and during the early 1920s.

<sup>132</sup> Mills [1986] has an account of the split; see also Joyce Marlow [1977].

<sup>133</sup> That was a commonly-held view among many women, for example Mary Ward or Violet Markham.

themselves to support legislation and policies which served the interests of women and children; and both were affiliated to the National Union of Working Women.

The organisation of the Federation was similar to that of other organisations: an executive committee with a number of subordinate committees. By 1900, these were parliamentary; finance; suffrage; temperance; and literature, with the whole executive forming the organisation committee. The executive held an annual council in London at which it presented its report and discussed resolutions sent in by local associations. These always included suffrage, but other subjects which occurred with equal regularity were Home Rule, licensing, and labour questions. The Federation's general attitude was that women had a stronger sense of morality than men, and that even though women might have some general party loyalties, these should not overdetermine their public work. Some women went further: in a debate over whether WLF members should canvass for Liberal parliamentary candidates who opposed women's suffrage, Mrs Osler put forward the view that they should not allow their other moral convictions to be over-ridden by inducements of support for the franchise:

One reason why women's influence seems to us specially valuable is that women are apt to form their political views on morality rather than expediency, and, however necessary it may be in politics to combine something of the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, we believe it is still more essential to the welfare of the nation that our people should recognise the inspiration of righteousness as the basis of all public and national conduct ...<sup>134</sup>

The WLF applied its moral politics through a number of educational programmes directed towards women and to the wider community. Members produced a range of pamphlets and organised lectures and conferences on all aspects of women's political involvement. As well as their own weekly newsletter, they published accounts of their work in a column in the *Woman's Herald*, and when the editor [Mr Stout] refused to take their material, they arranged for items to be sent to the *Westminster*

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<sup>134</sup> WLF Annual Council June 1898. This was often a topic for lectures by WLF members. For example, Mrs Lucock of Cardiff on 'The Political Influence of Women' [SWFN, August 1896, p.3].

*Gazette* for inclusion in its weekly woman's column.<sup>135</sup> The WLF did not undertake independent investigative work in the same way as the WIC, but co-operated with it over some major campaigns; for example the various investigations into women's work that took place during the 1890s, and the representations made to successive Governments over proposed amendments to the Factory Acts.<sup>136</sup> However, WLF members were divided over the extent to which they should support the WIC in calling for increased legislation and regulation of women's trades.<sup>137</sup> Many took the view that there should be no restrictions placed on women that were not equally placed on men, although for many years Lady Mary Murray [who was also a member of the WIC<sup>138</sup>] continued to propose resolutions and amendments that favoured the WIC view.<sup>139</sup> Margaret MacDonald's letters to her often have reminders or advice as to what the WLF should do to lobby the Government on employment legislation.<sup>140</sup>

The majority of women who served on Government committees until the outbreak of World War I were members of a Liberal Association. That reflected the dominance of Liberal women in public life, for example, as members of School Boards or local Councils,<sup>141</sup> and showed their awareness of the importance of institutional forms. Liberal women actively campaigned for women's membership of Government committees, and their particular contribution to the appointment of the first women to a Royal Commission is examined in the following chapter. However, they did not

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<sup>135</sup> Although the *Gazette* column included a number of supportive items on women's work, including those submitted by the WLF, it also ran a regular feature 'Home Politics' which mocked women's attempts to discuss politics. The piece for 26 Oct 1893 begins 'We adore politics, both of us. And our adoration is the more fervent and lasting because with it is always mixed a touch of the yearning tenderness which people feel for things of which they know they can never fully fathom, or attain to, them'

<sup>136</sup> Mrs McLaren reported that she had been part of a joint inquiry into women's employment. Annual Report 1900, p.47.

<sup>137</sup> At an executive committee meeting Mrs Broadley Reid proposed that they should circulate a leaflet published by the WIC on the regulation of homework, but this was opposed by Mrs Bright, Miss Priestman and Miss Browne as this might be taken as implying approval of the regulation of women's work. [SWFN, October 1898]

<sup>138</sup> See above for her friendship with Margaret MacDonald, p. 60.

<sup>139</sup> See Annual Reports for 1900, 1901, 1902 and 1903. Lady Mary was also a member of the WLF's parliamentary committee during these years.

<sup>140</sup> See, for example, Margaret MacDonald to M. Murray 25 Feb and 1 March 1902. PRO30/69/891.

<sup>141</sup> See Hollis, [1987: 57-65]. She notes that by 1896 the WLF had 80,000 members in 470 branches.

officially take the view that women should be members of all such committees, nor even that they should comprise half the membership of those to which they were appointed. The latter was always a minority view;<sup>142</sup> even the Women's Freedom League,<sup>143</sup> which campaigned for the equal participation of men and women in public life, did not adopt a consistent line on the matter until the 1920s.<sup>144</sup> Women recognised the importance of representation on all committees, but they were simply too preoccupied in the substance of particular investigations to fight for it as a general principle. Many were also concerned in the suffrage struggle, which was seen as the over-riding institutional form to be achieved.

There was great variety and fragmentation in women's political and social activism before 1918, but the suffrage campaign had provided a focus for their concerns. Even those organisations whose main aims were philanthropic, such as the NUWW, had recognised the importance of the possession of the parliamentary franchise as a part of women's citizenship.<sup>145</sup> In January 1918 the Representation of the People Act enfranchised women who were over 30 and rate payers, or wives of rate payers; in 1919 the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act allowed them to be Members of Parliament,<sup>146</sup> under the same conditions as men.<sup>147</sup> The voting age for women was lowered to 21 by the Equal Franchise Act of 1928.

Such reforms had limited impact on the lives of most women:

Anderson and Zinsser [1988: 367] note that

by 1925 the limitations of focusing only on issues of citizenship and the need to move on to other demands for women was clear both in

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<sup>142</sup> Margaret Ashton supported that view in a letter to the *Englishwoman* of November 1909 in which she rejected the idea that women's influence should be limited to "Bills relating to women and children" and insisted that '...as an integral part of the nation, all legislation touches women exactly as men...'. [Vol 4 (10), p.44-5].

<sup>143</sup> The Women's Freedom League was formed between 1907-09 as the result of a split in the Women's Social and Political Union; see Mulvihill [1989: 84-5].

<sup>144</sup> During the 1920s the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship also sought equal representation for women on all public bodies, but by this time the precedents governing women's appointment to committees had been well established.

<sup>145</sup> For the change in NUWW policy over women's suffrage, see pp.95-96 below.

<sup>146</sup> The same Act permitted them to serve as jurors, to practise as lawyers and to become judges, emphasising the powerful links that existed [and continue to exist] between the legal profession and Parliament.

<sup>147</sup> This led to the anomaly that women who were unable to vote in parliamentary elections could become MPs, demonstrated by the election of Jennie Lee at the age of 24 just before the provisions of the 1928 Act came into force. See Brookes [1967: 66-67.] Women could also be appointed as Justices of the Peace before they could vote in parliamentary elections: Barbara Wooton was made a JP in 1925 at the age of 28.



England and elsewhere in Europe.

For some women the coming of the franchise meant little in personal terms because their social or political influence was established through other forms. That was especially true of those women who had served on the many war-time boards and committees. Beatrice Webb wrote that

This revolution has been on my consciousness the whole time, but it has not risen into expression because I have been a mere spectator. ... I have always assumed political democracy as a necessary part of the machinery of government; I have never exerted myself to get it. ... I have been, for instance, wholly indifferent to my own political disfranchisement.<sup>148</sup>

Her relative disinterest may have been exceptional, but for women like her, who had indirect involvement with political work as committee members, the possession of the vote made little practical difference to that work. The appointment of women to Government committees during the 1920s did not reflect the contemporary state of the women's movement. Pressure groups such as the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and, less often, the Six Point Group or the Women's Freedom League provided witnesses for inquiries,<sup>149</sup> but rarely members.

These groups continued to campaign for the extension of full suffrage rights to women, but their increasingly different approaches meant that the Six Point activists tended to ignore the committee system as ineffective and unrepresentative. The Group's weekly newspaper, *Time and Tide*, paid little attention to the appointment of committees on matters concerning women, and did not press for women's inclusion in the same way as *The Vote*, the journal of the Women's Freedom League. Most women's groups had a cynical attitude towards the effects of committees in producing change, but the general policy within the WFL and NUSEC was that they should continue to press for women's participation in as many areas of public life as possible. The splits within the women's movement cannot be examined

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<sup>148</sup> *Diaries*, 16 June 1918, [Mackenzie, 1984: 308-09].

<sup>149</sup> This was particularly true for NUSEC: Eva Hubback was secretary to its Parliamentary Department and Information Bureau and appeared before several Royal Commissions and other inquiries. See below, chapter 5, for discussion of Royal Commission on Income Tax; she was also a witness to the Royal Commissions on National Health Insurance and Civil Service [1929-31]. For accounts of NUSEC, the Six Point Group and the divisions between them see Eoff [1991: 68-81]; and for a more detailed account of women's activism during this period see Alberti [1989, especially chapters 6 and 7].

here, but are registered to indicate the persistence of the variety and fragmentation in women's political and social activism after 1918, even though all groups shared the same long-term aim. Women activists were aware of how many barriers were still to be broken down, and women who had spent the years up to 1918 campaigning for the vote continued to fight both for the extension of the franchise to women on the same terms as men, and for a range of other reforms in public life.<sup>150</sup>

The efforts of women's associations to ensure female representation on committees continued during the 1920s, and women campaigners often related the absence of such representation to other sources of inequality. That was evident after the election of the first Labour Government in December 1923, which attracted considerable anger from women activists who felt it had not moved far enough to remove inequality between the sexes. In an editorial assessing the Government's record, *The Vote* drew attention to a series of failures which included the representation of women on Departmental Committees.<sup>151</sup> In fact that assessment was slightly unfair as, in retrospect, it can be seen that during their nine months in office the Labour Government appointed 28 committees of which 18 included women - the highest number for any year apart from 1918.<sup>152</sup> *The Vote* sustained the critique when a Conservative Government took office in November 1924, and became particularly aggrieved by the Government's apparently arbitrary distinctions between a 'representative' committee which could include women, and an 'expert' committee from which they could be excluded as not having sufficient knowledge of the subject under investigation. The Women's Freedom League had registered what was, by now, an automatic protest at the absence of women from a Government inquiry, in this case the Committee on Education and Industry appointed by the Ministry of Labour, and published the Minister's reply. He rejected their assertion that women should always be included

just because considerations affecting women are to be dealt with, or *vice versa* as regards men. The proper principle to my mind is to get hold of the best brains in either case, and if anyone, by reason of sex, is likely to have greater experience of the question, then of course that is a factor to be taken into

<sup>150</sup> See Alberti [1989] and B. Harrison [1987].

<sup>151</sup> 'Wobblers All', 8 Aug 1924, p.252.

<sup>152</sup> It should be noted that the 1918 figures are higher because of the proliferation of committees set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction [see chapter 4 and appendix 4].

consideration, but not the simple question of a possible member of a committee being a man or a woman.<sup>153</sup>

That provoked an angry response and a question about why men 'have apparently so great a monopoly of the available "best brains"..' and the League suggested that the likely result of the committee would be to recommend an education system for girls that would '..aim at sending the majority of them into domestic service, while boys will have a training for openings in all kinds of interesting trades..<sup>154</sup>

The subsequent addition of Violet Markham<sup>155</sup> to the committee did little to appease the WFL which continued to point out the injustice of such disproportionate representation,<sup>156</sup> although it was less concerned to challenge the Government on the equal ability of men and women to assess any subject. Thus in 1926, it urged the appointment of equal numbers of men and women 'on all Government Commissions or Departmental Committees *on questions which concern men equally with women*..<sup>157</sup> [my emphasis] This was a continuation of the claims of many late nineteenth century activists about women's special abilities, particularly their more refined sense of morality which, it was argued, meant that they were less affected by party political considerations. *The Vote* also argued that only women's non-party organisations could fully represent women's interests.<sup>158</sup>

The appointments of women to committees from 1922 indicate a more definite political bias with the inclusion of more women who had clear party links, even if their allegiance to party politics was weaker than their commitment to women's rights or to social and moral reform.<sup>159</sup> The previous dominance of Liberal women on committees gave way to a slightly

<sup>153</sup> Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, 2 July 1925, published in *The Vote*, 10 July 1925, p.220.

<sup>154</sup> *The Vote*, 10 July 1925, p.220.

<sup>155</sup> She resigned due to pressure of other work and was replaced by Mary Pickford.

<sup>156</sup> *The Vote*, 5 Feb 1926, p.44.

<sup>157</sup> 'Why Women's Organisations are needed', *The Vote*, 2 July 1926.

<sup>158</sup> A view shared by many other women's groups, although for different reasons; for example the Six Point Group held that until women were fully enfranchised they could not be adequately represented through the existing political parties.

<sup>159</sup> Margaret Beavan offers a good example of that point of view. When she was elected to Liverpool City Council in 1920, she said: 'I am not here as a politician ... merely as a woman ... I do not care for the intricacies of politics, but I do care ... passionately for the well-being of this city, of the city's mothers and its children.' [Ireland (1938: 166-67).] On a later occasion she described herself as '...representative of the women Citizens...'. [Beavan Mss., *Diary*, 4 May 1927.]

more balanced political composition, and in a few cases a woman from each of the three major parties was appointed to a committee.<sup>160</sup> However, such appointments were offset by others which reflected the party in power. For example, the Labour Government of 1924 made few major committee appointments of women who were not Labour supporters. There was some balance between the parties in appointments to Departmental and other committees, but the appointments of women to Royal Commissions were all of Labour members.<sup>161</sup>

Labour women also had views on the wider participation of working-class women in public life, and might have had some effect on the numbers of women appointed to committees by MacDonald's Government. Among the objects of the Standing Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations [reconvened in 1922<sup>162</sup>] were

...to secure their representation on all international, national or local bodies concerned in work which specially affects their interests ..  
[and] .. To set forth a policy for working women on such committees and to keep them informed on matters important to them in their work  
...<sup>163</sup>

However, apart from the brief period of the 1924 Labour Government, this did not produce any greater involvement by such women in Government committees; the key point in the quotation above was that of women's special interests. Another of the Standing Committee's objects was 'To act as an Advisory Committee on Women's Questions to the Executive Council of the Labour Party'.<sup>164</sup> The form and the intention of the committee was very like that of the Women's Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, and it had the same result, which was to sideline women's

<sup>160</sup> See for example the Departmental Committees on Young Offenders [1925-27] and Supervision of Charities [1925-27].

<sup>161</sup> The first Labour Government appointed four women to Royal Commissions, two each to those on Lunacy and Mental Disorder [1924-26] and National Health Insurance [1924-26]. The second Labour Government [1929-31] were more aware of the need for balance in such appointments. See J.R. Clynes [Home Secretary] letters to J.R. MacDonald about the membership of the RC on Licensing (England and Wales) [1929-31], 11 and 15 July 1929, MacDonald Mss. PRO30/69/1302.

<sup>162</sup> The earlier committee had been set up in 1916 by the WTUL and the WLL; it was chaired by Mary Macarthur. See Collins [1991: 216-17].

<sup>163</sup> The following were entitled to be represented on the Standing Committee: The Labour Party, TUC, and organisations affiliated to them where a substantial number of members were women; the Co-operative Union; the Women's Co-operative Guild; and Railway Women's Guilds.

<sup>164</sup> Minutes of Women Workers Group, 18 May 1922 [Tuckwell Papers, File 23].

concerns.<sup>165</sup>

A marked change during the 1920s was the far greater participation of Conservative women. That reflected a more formal recognition of women's party loyalties after the extension of the franchise in 1918, and the creation of separate Conservative women's associations in the 1920s. Women had been members of the Primrose League almost from its inception,<sup>166</sup> and the other major forms of organisation for Conservative women had been the Women's Tariff Reform League and Women's Unionist Association. The WUA had a strong local role; a 1904 pamphlet recommended regular visiting to build up social contacts and the monitoring of local opponents so that their activities could be reported to the Association's committees.<sup>167</sup> These two associations amalgamated to form the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association in 1906, as an adjunct to the Tariff Reform League.<sup>168</sup> A Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association was set up in November 1908, but it was no longer in existence by 1920.<sup>169</sup>

The Conservative Women's Associations were developed from the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association<sup>170</sup> in a much more methodical way after 1918 to try to secure the support and votes of working-class women, and to combat what was seen as the menace of Socialism.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> See below, chapter 4.

<sup>166</sup> See above, p. 46.

<sup>167</sup> 'Hints to Women Workers' by G.J.B. n.d. [Bridgeman Mss.4629/1/1904/1].

<sup>168</sup> See Green [1995]. He analyses the relationship of tariff reform to the history of the Conservative Party but does not include any references to the relevance of the Party's position on this issue for its women members. Green does not discuss the post-1914 period when Conservative women became more prominent publicly, but it seems possible that since Conservative women, like Conservative men, were strongly divided over tariff reform, that may have prevented them from offering the same degree of electoral support as their Liberal or Labour counterparts in the early years of the twentieth century, thus contributing to the Party's decline during those years. Joseph Chamberlain realised the importance of women's support, and wrote to W.C. Bridgeman that they must organise the education of voters before the next election: 'We must see if we cannot find some ladies' organisation able to counteract the women's work done by the Radicals..'. 29 July 1904. [Bridgeman Mss. 4629/1/19004/10].

<sup>169</sup> The Association was run on the same lines as groups such as the NUWW and WLL with sub-committees dealing with parliamentary and other matters. For a brief account of other women's organisations within the party see Lovenduski et al [1994: 617-23].

<sup>170</sup> They had realised that the Association would need to be renamed if Home Rule became a reality. See letter to Caroline Bridgeman from M. Talbot [probably Lady Mary Talbot], 3 May 1917. [Bridgeman Mss. 4629/2/1914/5]

<sup>171</sup> For a fuller account of this see Jarvis [1994].

The move towards a greater emphasis on political work had begun during the First World War; members of the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association were encouraged to identify the concerns of working women and to counteract revolutionary tendencies. Through their war work they should

try and enter into their thoughts and minds .. make it your business to find out, with sympathy, "what it is the workers want". No doubt you will disagree with a great deal of it, but the thing is to know, so as to separate the false from the true, the legitimate from the unreasonable, the practical from the merely idealist point of view. It will not lie in our hands to find the remedy. This only the Government can ordain. But we can render useful service by discovering and reporting to those in high places the situation as it strikes us, from practical experience.<sup>172</sup>

Conferences and meetings of local women's associations and the Women's Parliamentary Committee<sup>173</sup> continued that theme; a meeting of the eastern area committee discussed Socialist Sunday Schools and their teachings and agreed to send a copy of a leaflet<sup>174</sup> about the schools to each constituency chairman.<sup>175</sup> Lady Cautley spoke of the need 'of getting women to join the Co-operative Societies which will otherwise be captured by the Socialists'.<sup>176</sup>

Caroline Bridgeman had been involved in supportive political work since her husband's first election campaign in 1901, and was a key figure in the move for stronger women's organisations in the party. In her address to the annual general meeting of the south eastern area on the party's election failure in 1923, she stressed the need for women to have a separate organisation, but with a mixed executive. Like Liberal women some 30 years earlier, Conservative women activists began to recognise the importance of women's presence on boards and committees. Mrs Wootton of the eastern area pointed out that there was a disparity between the

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<sup>172</sup> Circular letter to members of the WUTRA from their Chairman, Mary Maxse, June 1917 [Bridgeman Mss. 4629/2/1914/4]

<sup>173</sup> The membership of the committee comprised the wives of Conservative MPs.

<sup>174</sup> The title begins 'Poison ..' the rest is missing.

<sup>175</sup> Minutes, 31 Oct 1921. [Conservative Party Archives, ARE7/11/1]

<sup>176</sup> WPC, South Eastern Area, AGM, 16 Jan 1924. [ARE9/11/1] The Women's Liberal Federation had raised the same issue some years earlier. See Annual Report of the WLF, 'Co-operative Societies and the Liberal Party', 1918: 36-37.

parties in the appointment of women JPs: in Cambridge the five women magistrates were all Labour supporters.<sup>177</sup> At their 1924 conference they discussed the need for Conservative women to obtain representation on boards of guardians, care committees, pensions committees, borough, county borough, and county councils, and the executive committees of Women's Guilds and local Co-operative Societies.<sup>178</sup>

Despite the emphasis laid on Conservative women's supportive role by their organisers,<sup>179</sup> the correspondence and records of their associations contain very few of the domestic analogies used by Liberal and Labour women to explain and justify women's public work. That did not mean that Conservative women were opposed to domestic roles for working-class women, but that they were far less likely to accept such definitions for themselves, or to have been defined by them. To some extent they seemed to have been able to adopt and adapt an appearance of aristocratic detachment which made them seem natural members of committees.<sup>180</sup>

#### 4. The National Union of Working Women

The NUWW was not an overtly political association, but it brought together middle-and upper-class women with a huge range of interests and causes, and cannot be ignored in any consideration of women's political intelligence. Its influence as a lobbying and pressure group was important from the 1890s until the end of World War 1. As Serena Kelly [1993:168] has observed, one of the reasons for that influence was that membership of the union was not confined to individuals; it seems likely that the majority of women's philanthropic societies were affiliated to the NUWW at some time during the first 20 years of its existence. Its published conference papers provide one of the most comprehensive collections of women's writing on social issues of that, or any other, period.

All women discussed in this chapter, and many others in this study, were members of the NUWW, formed in Beatrice Webb's words 'out of a sort

<sup>177</sup> Minutes, Eastern Area, 1 June 1921 [ARE7/11/1]

<sup>178</sup> WPC, Eastern Area, Conference Report, 13 March 1924. [ARE7/11/1].

<sup>179</sup> As well as examples cited above, see also C. Bridgeman 'work of a Women's Association during an Election', which stressed the need for co-operation with men and the paramount importance of organisation: 'Women must be under the head Agent, and realise they are only supplementary...'. 1909 [Bridgeman Mss. 4629/1/1909/16/1.]

<sup>180</sup> This may have been helped by the election of titled women such as Lady Astor and the Duchess of Atholl as Conservative Members of Parliament.

of federation of philanthropic societies to befriend young girls.'<sup>181</sup> Mrs Webb and later historians of the NUWW give 1895 as its foundation, and it was in that year that the name was adopted; but a Union of Ladies' Societies had been in existence since the 1880s, and by 1891 was producing a magazine *Women Workers*.<sup>182</sup> Louise Creighton, one of the NUWW's most influential members, and seven times its elected President, fixed the beginnings of the NUWW at a Birmingham Conference in 1890, which she attended with her close friend Kathleen Lyttelton:

This was the beginning of the NUWW. It was then a conference of the Association for the care of friendless girls, which had been started by Ellice Hopkins.<sup>183</sup>

The annual conferences were clearly one of the highlights of the year for women activists. Like the annual meetings of the Trades Union Congress and the Women's Co-operative Guild, the conferences were held in a different town each year,<sup>184</sup> both to spread the travel costs for members and to ensure that the Union maintained its local connections; the conferences were organised by the local branch, and chaired by its president. The available correspondence and journals of many of the women I have studied show that the conferences were important socially as well as professionally. Lucy Deane noted the names of women who could help her with her work as a sanitary inspector;<sup>185</sup> and Elizabeth Haldane's letters to her mother referred to meeting up with old friends and co-workers.<sup>186</sup> Louise Creighton mentioned a number of friendships that had begun with the NUWW;<sup>187</sup> and in later life after she was widowed noted that

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<sup>181</sup> *Diaries*, 18 Oct 1895 [Mackenzie, 1983:83].

<sup>182</sup> Kelly [1993] gives an account of the early history of the Union and details of some of the other organisations which were amalgamated to form it. There was also an early women's trade union of the same name; see chapter 3, n. 93.

<sup>183</sup> Covert [1994:89-90].

<sup>184</sup> This was also the policy of the Women's Labour League.

<sup>185</sup> Deane Business Journals, Nov 1893.

<sup>186</sup> She presented a paper on women's rights to the Glasgow conference in 1895, and noted that she had 'met a lot of people. Miss L.S.' [Louisa Stevenson] 'was most hilarious & she & I drank hock & champagne .. she felt a longing to do so after the Temperance discussion & seeing everyone around teetotal!'. [Haldane Mss. 6046, E.S. Haldane to her mother, Nov 1895, f.158]

<sup>187</sup> Covert [1994], p.116.



it ‘..chiefly interests me now on account of the friends I meet..’<sup>188</sup>

Most women's philanthropic societies were affiliated to the NUWW at some time during their and its existence; and there were indirect links with other associations either through membership of individuals, or through invitations to observe or participate at the annual conferences. For example, May Tennant, a member of the WTUL and an executive member of the WNLA, was also a member of the NUWW, and Gertrude Tuckwell of the WTUL spoke at NUWW conferences. Although the Women's Co-operative Guild did not affiliate with the union,<sup>189</sup> several of its leading members [for example, Margaret Llewelyn Davies and Rosalind Vaughan Nash] were individual members of the NUWW. Mary Clifford was a member of the Western District of the WCG, and an executive member of the NUWW and its president in 1904.<sup>190</sup> Despite the presence of many leading Liberal women on its executive, the NUWW maintained a principle of party political neutrality, which enabled women from very different political backgrounds to discuss social problems. Thus it could even include the radical Christian socialist Edith Lees who was strongly opposed to philanthropic solutions for social and economic distress:

We have women philanthropists in scores and the army is daily increasing, but we want more women working strenuously for that cause which has as its goal a time when philanthropy will drop off with other excrescences of modern civilisation.<sup>191</sup>

Despite her rejection of philanthropy Edith Lees was in tune with many of the other beliefs of the NUWW, most notably its insistence during its

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<sup>188</sup> Letter to her sister, Ida, 29 Oct 1905, Creighton Mss. She was generally depressed at this time, and found her routine of committees and meetings ‘dreary work ... All the meaning seems to have gone out of it.’; but was glad to be kept busy. [Letters to Ida, 15 Sept and 7 March 1907] Despite her own gloom about growing old, expressed in her private letters, she took a more optimistic view in public and her paper to the 1907 conference was on the positive benefits of growing old.

<sup>189</sup> There were connections, however. It was represented on the Women's Industrial Council from the Council's foundation in 1894, and the WIC was affiliated to the NUWW.

<sup>190</sup> See also the correspondence of Millicent Fawcett with colleagues and co-workers in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies; this has been cross-checked against the names of the most prominent committee members, and many letters contain references to the proceedings of the NUWW or to a meeting of the correspondents at a NUWW conference.

<sup>191</sup> Edith Lees was the Secretary to the Fellowship of the New Life, a socialist organisation started in 1882, devoted to political reform through moral regeneration. In 1891 she married Havelock Ellis. The quotation is from ‘Woman and the New Life’, [1890].

early years on the special mission of women.<sup>192</sup> In her article for *Seedtime* cited above, Miss Lees urged women to realise their higher moral nature: 'it is her absolute duty to go to the end of her vision'.<sup>193</sup> That was a constant theme for Louise Creighton in her addresses to the annual conferences; she did not share Miss Lees' and other socialists' hostility to charitable work, but she cautioned against complacency. In her valedictory address to the 1893 NUWW conference she reminded her co-workers of their responsibilities towards other classes, particularly their own servants; and that the

...sympathy which should exist between all classes .. [should] .. not .. be a mere matter of words for us .. Do not let us talk about being real friends to the poor, unless we are very sure that this is more than a mere phrase. It is not easy to be a true friend ...<sup>194</sup>

Louise Creighton was a dominant figure within the NUWW from its earliest years, and was largely responsible for the relationship of its organisational structure to its reformist aims. In her presidential address in 1896 she told members that

if we can draw together women who are interested in social questions we shall become a power, and our voice will be worth listening to. But before we can speak, we must know; and therefore one of the chief objects of our Union is to further the study of questions connected with women's work. For this purpose we have organised sub-committees ...<sup>195</sup>

There were six of these in 1899:<sup>196</sup> legislation; Indian and colonial; literature; industrial; lectures on charitable and social work; and rescue and preventive. More were added to cover a range of subjects of concern to women, and by 1920 there were 19. The list of their membership is a roll-

<sup>192</sup> See the discussion of the WLF above, p.80.

<sup>193</sup> Lees [1890]

<sup>194</sup> NUWW, Annual Report, 1893, p.224-25. Mrs Creighton's own attitudes to her servants and the poor among whom she did parish work did not fully measure up to this ideal. Her letters often refer to difficulties with servants. She reprimanded her mother for continuing to give money to a cook, jointly employed with her husband who was the coachman, both of whom were dismissed because of his drinking, on the grounds that he should be forced to accept his responsibilities. [29 Jan 1877, Creighton Mss.] However since she often referred to her lectures as doing her good: 'whatever they may have done to other people .. [they] .. help one think more wisely about one's own life ..' [To her sister Ida, 19 Jan 1890, Creighton Mss.], she may have given them in the knowledge that she was as much in need of self-improvement as her audiences.

<sup>195</sup> NUWW, Annual Report, 1896, p.3.

<sup>196</sup> They became known as sectional committees in 1900; several of them also appointed their own sub-committees. The organisational structure of the NUWW reflected that of the other associations discussed in this chapter.

call of women who were already, or were to become, prominent in public or political life; one of the first members of the industrial committee, for example, was Beatrice Webb. Its convenor from 1899 until 1911 was Margaret MacDonald and other members included Margaret Bondfield and Margaret Irwin. The Home Office women's factory inspectorate was well represented: May Tennant was a member, Constance Smith joined it in 1905, becoming Convenor in 1911 after Margaret MacDonald's death.

Beatrice Webb distanced herself from the NUWW because of what she saw as its too dominant Christian ethos, and although she had intended to remain involved with its sub-committees '...to keep the Union straight on industrial matters...',<sup>197</sup> she had little to do with it after 1896 when she resigned from the Executive Council. Her critique of the NUWW as '...flagrantly non-political and distinctly religious in tone...' <sup>198</sup> has tended to colour our subsequent assessments, and ignores the fact that many women members of the NUWW were firmly, even if not flagrantly, political elsewhere. Margaret Bondfield was a trades union organiser and labour activist.<sup>199</sup> Margaret MacDonald combined her NUWW involvement with a strong commitment to socialism: she was a member of the WCG, and, like Margaret Bondfield, one of the founders of the WLL;<sup>200</sup> she was also a member of the executive of the WIC, and chaired its statistical committee. That combination of offices was of mutual benefit to the organisations and to the women who held them. The women's trades union movement was inclined to be suspicious of the NUWW, many of whose members had little experience of industrial relations,<sup>201</sup> and were not always sympathetic to the aims of the unions. Margaret MacDonald was able to advise and inform her

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<sup>197</sup> Webb, *Diaries*, 5 Oct 1896 [Mackenzie, 1983: 102].

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> Her autobiography records her involvement with the trades union movement, the International Labour Party, and her subsequent career as a Councillor and MP.

<sup>200</sup> Christine Collette [1989] sees her as politically moderate, and does not record her NUWW work, but her account confirms the extent of Mrs MacDonald's political activity, see especially p.44.

<sup>201</sup> This was equally true for many of those involved with the WTUL and WIC, most of whom had joined these organisations from philanthropic motives or from a generalised commitment to collectivism, rather than as industrial workers attempting to improve their wages and conditions.

NUWW colleagues from her experience with the WIC,<sup>202</sup> and worked to reconcile these and other groups over industrial legislation. She wrote to Lady Mary Murray asking her to stand for election as a vice-president of the NUWW,

...for the NUWW represents a large number of active women, and so far we have been gradually getting them to take more and more interest in Industrial matters and in the general matter of legislation. They are well on the side of protective legislation for women!<sup>203</sup>

Although she was not successful in persuading Lady Mary to stand, they continued to share information; in a subsequent letter she noted that the NUWW pamphlet she was enclosing [on industrial problems] had mainly been written by her.<sup>204</sup>

May Tennant was another member who also exploited her connections with the NUWW and other organisations in the cause of protective legislation for women. She belonged to an even wider range of associations than Mrs MacDonald, where her expertise in industrial matters and her political connections, [as the wife of H.J. Tennant and sister-in-law of H.H. Asquith] especially after the Liberal victory of 1905, were probably of equal value to her co-workers. As well as her involvement with the NUWW and the WTUL, she was on the executive committee of the WNLA; and chaired the industrial sub-committee of the Victoria League.<sup>205</sup> She had also established herself as trustworthy in the eyes of the clerical establishment: when Lady Laura Ridding [herself the wife of a Bishop] tried to enlist the support of Randall Davidson<sup>206</sup> for the regulation of home work, he replied that he wanted to consult with friends '...e.g. Mrs Tennant ...' before he could agree to sponsor the legislation '...although you tell me she is not in complete accord with you. Her experience at least is valuable'.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> This also applied to Lady Laura Ridding, wife of the first Bishop of Southwell; she was a vice-president of the WIC and the convenor of the NUWW's legislation committee, of which Margaret MacDonald was Secretary. The two women worked closely together for over ten years.

<sup>203</sup> 22 September 1899, MacDonald Mss., PRO30/69/891.

<sup>204</sup> 20 March 1901, MacDonald Mss., PRO30/69/891.

<sup>205</sup> The committee was formed in March 1905 to collect all factory laws in the self-governing Colonies and compiled a handbook: 'The Factory and Shop Acts of the British Dominions'. The Victoria League brought together many of the women discussed here. For its formation, see below, chapter 4, note 24.

<sup>206</sup> Then Bishop of Winchester; and Archbishop of Canterbury 1903-28.

<sup>207</sup> 29 Jan and 6 Feb 1901, MacDonald Mss., PRO30/69/1371.

Among the 25 societies affiliated to the NUWW by 1900 were four designated by its executive as political: the Ladies Grand Council of the Primrose League; the Women's Liberal Federation; the Women's Liberal Unionist Association; and the National Women's Liberal Association. Each of these was entitled to one representative on the Union's National Council for every thousand of their members, and although there was a limit of 10 representatives for each society, the potential existed for a considerable Liberal majority. Furthermore, although the other affiliated societies were not classed as political, many had a distinct Liberal bias, for example the Women's Local Government Society [two representatives on the Council] and the British Women's Temperance Association [10 representatives].<sup>208</sup>

The determination of the NUWW leadership to remain politically neutral became harder to sustain as suffrage agitation grew, and there were a number of attempts to amend its regulations to enable members to submit conference resolutions on topics previously barred as party political. Lady Laura Ridding pointed out that the Constitution needed to be changed to allow resolutions on a wider range of subjects, but that Mrs Creighton had argued that

... we exist to bind workers together, not to advocate any policy. I tell her that in our birth this was true - but that we are too acknowledged a force to be able to continue neutral.<sup>209</sup>

Most NUWW conference resolutions were limited to domestic matters; until 1906 there were only three exceptions, and of these, only one [on the Armenian Atrocities<sup>210</sup>] was of general concern rather than specifically to do with women.<sup>211</sup> The policy was to accept resolutions that upheld the Union's constituted objects: to promote the social, civil, moral and religious welfare of women. Both its council and conference regularly carried motions calling for the Union to declare itself in favour of women's suffrage on the grounds that women could only achieve the NUWW objectives if they were enfranchised, but such motions were resisted by the executive as it was

<sup>208</sup> Information taken from Annual Report 1900, p.16-17.

<sup>209</sup> L. Ridding to M.E. MacDonald 21 Oct. 1903. MacDonald Mss., PRO30/69/1372. This letter contains a detailed account of the attempts made to alter the Constitution and office organisation of the NUWW.

<sup>210</sup> Moved by Mrs Bunting in 1896.

<sup>211</sup> The other two were 'Venereal Disease in the Army in India' [1897], and 'Societies Helping Girls on the Continent' [1904].

feared they would compromise the NUWW's neutrality. The issue became focused on whether or not the NUWW, through its executive council should be officially represented at public meetings and demonstrations on matters over which the council was not unanimous. An Extraordinary council meeting in 1910 voted on two resolutions: first, that the central executive should not be represented officially at such public events. That was defeated by a large majority. The second resolution was that public action was to be left to the discretion of the executive committee, but that action was only to be taken on contentious subjects when notice was placed on the agenda, and the action was approved by two-thirds of those present. That resolution was also lost. An amended resolution that the executive committee should take part only in organised demonstrations and deputations on matters on which the Union and the council were unanimous was also lost.<sup>212</sup> In 1912 Louise Creighton proposed, and Millicent Fawcett seconded, a resolution committing the NUWW to work for women's suffrage. It was opposed by Mary Ward and Gladys Pott, but carried by 199 votes to 59.

Louise Creighton had changed her individual position on the suffrage question,<sup>213</sup> and the Union had also changed with the recruitment of younger members. Such women needed no convincing of the importance of women's suffrage, but they maintained the NUWW's gradualist, reforming position. Shena Potter [Simon], for example, was a student at Newnham College from 1904-1907 where she developed an interest in socialist politics, attending meetings of the Fabian and Labour societies, although she joined neither.<sup>214</sup> She joined the NUWW in 1909 and in 1911 became secretary to its legislation committee, and to the newly formed national insurance committee. She developed an extensive knowledge of insurance matters,<sup>215</sup> and wrote a number of papers and addressed many meetings

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<sup>212</sup> Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the National Council, 23 Nov 1910 in NUWW Annual Report 1910-11.

<sup>213</sup> She had been one of the original promoters of the Anti-Suffrage movement, but, with Beatrice Webb, had publicly recanted in 1906.

<sup>214</sup> She later wrote of her disillusionment with the Fabian Society: 'I think some of them at least have definite and far off goals, but they will not talk of them but merely go on step by step, getting what they can wherever they can. I don't deny that this policy is effective - up to a point - but I can't believe that it is entirely honest'. [Letter to Ernest Simon, n.d. c1923, cited in J. Simon (1986).]

<sup>215</sup> She addressed the 1910 and 1911 NUWW conferences on national insurance.

on the subject.<sup>216</sup> Her socialist beliefs were matched by her feminism; and although she supported the suffragettes she had decided against taking militant action, initially because her parents objected ‘..and so long as I am economically dependent upon them I cannot do what they dislike..’, but by 1912 she had come to believe that other issues were equally important.

Writing to her future husband she said that the suffrage would

prove to the world in general, as well as to women themselves, that they have duties to the community in addition to the production and care of children.<sup>217</sup>

She cited Margaret MacDonald, whom she greatly admired:

...her example has done .. more to show what women can do in the outside world as well as in their own homes than any amount of theorising on “women’s sphere”.<sup>218</sup>

The NUWW’s gradualist reformism and the increasing eminence of its leading members were important in establishing it as a respectable institution, and one from which Government advisers could be recruited.<sup>219</sup> However, such appointments were not automatic; even an organisation that united the most politically aware and best-connected women of the period had no guarantee that it could ensure women’s representation on committees as Lady Laura Ridding’s failure, despite extensive lobbying, to have a woman appointed to the 1898 Departmental Committee on Inebriate Homes demonstrates.<sup>220</sup>

The NUWW changed its name to the National Council of Women in 1918,<sup>221</sup> and although it remained an important organisation, it did not

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<sup>216</sup> The NUWW had been instrumental in convening a conference to discuss women’s position, and the national insurance committee, made up of MPs and women from a number of organisations, had been established as a result. At the same time a coalition of women’s groups [the WLL, WCG, WIC, NFWW, WTUL and the Railway Women’s Guild] had formed the Industrial Women’s Insurance Advisory Board, also to safeguard women’s interests under the proposed legislation, and Shena Potter acted as liaison between them. Among the members were Margaret Bondfield, Margaret Llewelyn Davies, Mary Macarthur, Marion Phillips and Ethel Bentham; the first three of whom frequently attended NUWW conferences.

<sup>217</sup> Simon [1986:30-31]. Lady Simon resigned temporarily from her committee work in 1912 when she married E.D. Simon but continued her connection with the NUWW.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> It also served the same function for the civil service; see earlier in this chapter for the relationship between women’s associations and women members of the civil service.

<sup>220</sup> See NUWW reports and L. Ridding correspondence with Margaret MacDonald, discussed in chapter: 3, p. 111.

<sup>221</sup> See NUWW, *Occasional Papers*, 1918: 9; 27-28. The motion for the name change was submitted by Louise Creighton.

retain its earlier predominance as a pressure group. As early as 1918, the NCW President, Mrs Ogilvie Gordon, had complained in an interview with Mona Wilson that

her society was irritated by the apparently ill considered manner in which the few women who had been put on Government Advisory Councils or Committees had been chosen...<sup>222</sup>

Other women's associations had been established or had grown stronger during the war years, and appealed to a wider cross-section.<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, a larger number of women became involved in party politics after the war; and, in particular, the growing Conservative women's associations would have included many who might previously have supported the NUWW.<sup>224</sup>

The NCW/NUWW continued to be well represented in committees, but not at its former level. Its members had achieved prominence across a range of public offices, especially as magistrates; and in local government and in administrative posts. Although they continued to campaign for women's participation in public life, they were to some extent superseded by more radical groups, such as the Women's Freedom League or the Six Point Group.

### Conclusion

This chapter has argued that women made a significant contribution to British political and intellectual life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but that their contribution has to be understood within the context of their restricted political and social position. Women used family and friendship connections and their increasing membership of a range of associations to further their philanthropic, professional and political aims. Their involvement in charitable social work and the growth of careers in education, medicine and administration provided other opportunities to reinforce personal networks with professional or civic ones.

<sup>222</sup> 22 Feb 1918, [PRO.RECO1/749/5079]. Lady Emmott [also a member of the NUWW/NCW] may have contributed to Government perceptions of the council when she described it as 'too identified with a certain strata of society to be entirely successful..'. [Meeting of sub-committee of WAC, Ministry of Reconstruction, 28 Feb 1918; PRO.RECO1/749/5079.]

<sup>223</sup> For example, Women's Institutes and the Mothers' Union; the Women's Co-operative Guild also continued to be important.

<sup>224</sup> See above for the growth in Conservative women's party associations, pp. 87-89.



The absorption of women into Government committees was preceded and accompanied by their growing participation in other non-official groups and inquiries. Women were primarily involved with philanthropic societies as workers, but they also gave papers to statistical and other societies, for which they also undertook investigations. By the later part of the nineteenth century their presence within such organisations was accepted and largely unremarked.<sup>225</sup> Eileen Yeo describes such women as 'social mothers' and delineates a division and a communion of labour in which women's service both to the working-class and poor, and to the organisation was valued and validated by their male colleagues:

Professional men ratified the scientific credentials of women social workers. Women endorsed the service claims of professional men.<sup>226</sup>

She argues that the ideology of separate spheres was a particularly convenient justification for middle-class ambitions, with women as arbiters of morality, while men pursued the amoral activities of commerce and business.<sup>227</sup>

The rise of organisations run by women with only, or predominantly, women members served to reinforce these distinctions, although they also gave women a supportive base from which to argue for their more extensive public and political involvement. This relates to another of Yeo's points about the ways in which middle-class women could both accept and subvert such divisions in order to make careers for themselves as academics and practitioners in the social sciences. That was reflected in their professional and political organisations, and in their work on advisory committees. However, their complementary role as policy advisers was equally subject to the qualifications and controls of those who appointed the committees, who were careful to ensure the segregation of women's issues. Thus although by the 1910s women's organisations had begun tentatively to argue for women's inclusion on all committees and inquiries, they were largely thwarted by their own success in the establishment of specifically

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<sup>225</sup> Hollis [1979] notes that women were involved with the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science from its beginning. [p.223] She gives a brief but comprehensive account of the range and nature of women's philanthropic involvement. For women as social investigators see Jane Lewis in Bulmer [1991].

<sup>226</sup> In Bulmer [1991:54].

<sup>227</sup> Yeo [1992], and [1996: chs. 4 and 5]. The point that women's professionalisation was predominantly based on service is also made in Copelman [1996: 26]. For an earlier discussion of social maternalism see Lewis [1984: 92-97].

female areas of expertise.

By the 1920s the position had changed little; there had been a growth of women's direct political participation as party members and activists, but their work continued to be determined by existing networks and by the definitions of women's interests that had been established during the nineteenth century.

## Chapter 3

**Working in quiet ways: the expansion of the political world in the nineteenth century**

This chapter traces the growing visibility, during the nineteenth century, of middle and upper class women, through the committee form, as they became accepted as the voices of all women and children. It shows that as electoral representation was extended to more men during the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup> and as the committee form evolved to become more directly class-representative, those changes also permitted the inclusion of women from the middle and upper classes, first as expert witnesses and then as members. The rising involvement of these women was also accompanied by a decrease of direct evidence to committees from poor or working class women. That shift marked an erosion in an available form of representation for them, and for a smaller group who gave evidence by virtue of positions or offices held through tradition or patronage, such as postmistresses or weighbridge-keepers.<sup>2</sup> The chapter considers women as witnesses to, and as members of, committees and traces two simultaneous shifts upward and downward rather than a direct replacement of working women with middle class women. Groups of the latter did not deliberately set out to replace the former, even though that was the result of their increased involvement.

There was a rise of named professional bodies during the century,<sup>3</sup> which were able to target particular committees so that evidence could be heard from their individual representatives. Such associations were exclusively male, and most did not admit women to their membership until

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<sup>1</sup> The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1885 successively widened the adult male franchise, which remained incomplete until the 1918 Act, which brought partial enfranchisement to women and fully enfranchised most men.

<sup>2</sup> Such women invariably held these positions by right of inheritance from husbands or fathers. The proprietors of small businesses were another small group who gave evidence because of their position; for example Mrs Sellers, the keeper of the Tap at the Fleet Prison, [RC into Fleet, Palace Court and Marshalsea Prisons, 1815-18; or Mrs Ann Davis, a lodging-house keeper who testified to the RC into Electoral Corruption at Barnstaple, 1854.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the Law Society was formed in 1825; the British Medical Association in 1856. Civil engineers had formed an association in 1818, pharmacists in 1841, architects in 1848, chartered surveyors in 1868 and chartered accountants in 1880. [Figures taken from Anderson, 1995.] For an account of the growth of male professionalism, see Perkin [1990]; for women, see Franz [1965].

well into the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Women set up philanthropic or campaigning associations and societies, which also had some success in lobbying committees.<sup>5</sup> Representatives from groups previously excluded from committee participation were heard as witnesses, or appointed as members, and in that sense the situation was similar for men and women. However, men were appointed by virtue of their professional affiliations, while women were appointed as representatives of other women. The practical result was to conflate class and gender representation for women. Thus, although men might have been chosen as representative of class they were not confined by it, as women were confined by gender.

Deborah Thom [1986: 264] has observed that during the early years of the twentieth century

...all general discussion about women ...[reflects] ... the belief that women are more strongly affected than men by their gender - and that this is a problem.

In the specific area of committee membership that gave rise to an administrative double standard. The growth of interest representation generally contributed to the idea that women were a distinct group needing representation. Women were appointed to committees to reflect the views of women, or the composite category women-and-children, regardless of class, because they were considered to need specialist representation. Women were also usually appointed because they had experience in some aspect of the matter to be investigated.<sup>6</sup> At the same time they had to assume the neutrality expected of any committee member, and a form of gender neutrality. They were thus appointed because they were women, but expected to behave like honorary men.

There has continued to be general agreement among administrative historians that there were profound changes in executive government and

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<sup>4</sup> The British Medical Association admitted women in 1892, but the Royal College of Physicians did not permit women members until 1909, and they were not allowed to be elected Fellows until 1934. The first woman was admitted to the Law Society in 1922.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Ladies' Sanitary Association during the 1870s; and the National Union of Women Workers from the 1880s. There were also some organisations that might be described as quasi-professional, but they were essentially campaigning groups, which sought the entry of women to professions; for example the Female Medical Society formed in 1865; see J. Donnison [1977]. Women teachers were the most numerous and best organised professional group: the Head Mistresses' Association was founded in 1874; and the Association of Assistant Mistresses in 1884 [see Oram (1996: 101, 104-07)].

<sup>6</sup> For example, as a teacher or a charity worker.

the civil service during the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> As the *ad hoc* committee system was [and is] neither fully administrative nor fully executive, it rarely occupies more than a marginal part in such debates.<sup>8</sup> However, the system itself can be seen to offer a degree of continuity, both as a form of governance in its own right and as a factor in other changing forms. It was a means of preparing for change [even if the work of inquiries did not result in immediate legal or administrative reforms], but it was also traditional, continuing to display the supposedly inherited wisdom of the aristocracy, while incorporating the particular knowledge and skills of a growing number of specialists.<sup>9</sup>

Until the 1870s, the dominant Government investigatory forms were the Select Committee and the Royal Commission.<sup>10</sup> As Select Committees could only be appointed from Members of the Houses of Parliament, their composition changed only inasmuch as Members of Parliament were drawn from a slightly broader cross-section of the population following successive electoral reforms.<sup>11</sup> Appointments to Royal Commissions and, from the 1870s, Departmental Committees, were rather more reflective of electoral and social changes, and their members were more frequently chosen to represent particular interests, although Government departments rarely acknowledged this,<sup>12</sup> and most members continued to see themselves as representative of the inquiry as a body rather than as individuals delegated by groups or associations. As late as 1926, Sir Norcot Warren appended a note to the Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency that he had

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<sup>7</sup> See Finlayson [1994] for a recent discussion of these administrative changes in relation to social welfare policies, as well as for references to the parameters of the debate on nineteenth century government generated by MacDonagh [1958]. See also Cromwell [1977]. Finlayson is relatively silent on the place of women as agents in, or objects of these changes, although he notes the perception of some women that they should distance themselves from charitable work [p.159-60]. For an overview of women's work in this connection, see Lewis [1994].

<sup>8</sup> See E. Harrison [1995:xii] for a discussion of the position of Royal Commissions.

<sup>9</sup> See, for several examples of that incorporation, the essays in MacLeod (ed.) [1988], Part 2: Professions and Powers.

<sup>10</sup> See also Eastwood [1989] for his registration of the increased centralisation of forms of state investigation during the early nineteenth century, especially pp.291-3.

<sup>11</sup> See V. Hart [1978] for a discussion of the limitations of the extension of representative democracy, and Muller [1977] for the practical problems faced by working-class MPs in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Harrison, [1995: xxvii].

signed in a personal capacity and not in any representative capacity of the Imperial Bank of India of which he was Managing Governor and that his duty as a commissioner was 'wholly towards the public'.<sup>13</sup> A notable exception to such avowed impartiality was Thomas Knipe, who in 1887 had refused to sign the report of the Royal Commission on Irish Land Laws as it contained recommendations which were 'against the interests of the class I represent'.<sup>14</sup>

Between these two extremes most members shared Departmental or Government ambiguity over how far a particular inquiry was supposed to be representative. That vagueness, whether or not it was deliberately cultivated, could be manipulated both by appointers and appointees, and the proliferation of groups, associations, and institutions during the nineteenth century meant that there were increasing claims for inquiries to reflect a range of interests. As the choice of members was always decided by the sponsoring Department or, ultimately the Prime Minister,<sup>15</sup> such claims could be ignored or implemented as expediency dictated.<sup>16</sup> Despite that, it was clear that by the end of the century there was an acceptance that some inquiries might contain some members who had a declared interest [often expressed as expertise] in the subject under investigation.

There was also an increase in the number of Government inquiries, particularly on social and economic problems,<sup>17</sup> which was a response both to public and to political concerns. That further widened the range of people involved to include those with professional or practical knowledge of the conditions being investigated. As members of philanthropic and

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<sup>13</sup> 1925-26: Cmd.2687, xxvi, p.102.

<sup>14</sup> Knipe to Earl Cowper, 15 Feb 1887 [1887: C.4969,xxvi, p.24]. Knipe was a tenant farmer, albeit on a large scale, and was clearly not of the same class as the other members of the commission, which included two peers.

<sup>15</sup> Final approval still lay with the monarch, and although there were instances when Queen Victoria rejected proposed members, her objections were usually over-ruled. In 1887 she succeeded in having Charles Bradlaugh removed from the RC on Markets [MacLeod, 1967: 199], but in 1892 Joseph Arch was appointed to the RC on Aged Poor despite her opposition [Matthew, 1994:169].

<sup>16</sup> The rising use of Departmental Committees might be linked to the move to more representative Royal Commissions, as their appointments were less formal and subject to less discussion and scrutiny. There was also no obligation on the Government to publish their reports, although as their use increased, the custom invariably was to do so. [See above, chapter 1, p.30.]

<sup>17</sup> See Ford and Ford [1953].

campaigning groups, women gained experience, expertise and acceptability both within such groups and as participants in Government inquiries. Like the pre-reform electoral system and other archaic forms of governance,<sup>18</sup> the committee system did not deliberately exclude women: the most valuable feature of committees was their flexibility and there were apparently no official attempts to produce written criteria for their members.<sup>19</sup> Departmental resistance to official forms of categorisation, or regulation, for committees was usually based on opposition to Treasury controls,<sup>20</sup> and there continued to be considerable latitude in the choice of members, which permitted the inclusion of women, even though it was heavily circumscribed, as this and succeeding chapters demonstrate. The parameters for women's participation were fixed from the period just after the mid-nineteenth century when they began to appear as expert witnesses representing women's views. Women's areas of expertise and the interests that they chose, or were asked, to represent<sup>21</sup> were defined by their involvement in philanthropic - shading into professional - activity, both of which were defined by gender. They thus came to be seen as experts in welfare, broadly defined as matters concerned with education, employment and health. The women who gave evidence to Select Committees and Royal Commissions from the 1850s onwards were often described as social

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<sup>18</sup> The women's movement paid some attention to publicising the existence of these, see C.C. Stopes [1907] or Chapman & Chapman [1909]. For a later account of women office-holders see Graham [1929].

<sup>19</sup> This was in contrast to the situation in Sweden, for example, where all aspects of appointments and procedures of Royal Commissions and similar Inquiries were deliberately codified during the nineteenth century [Weller, 1994:2 and refs. cited there]. In Britain there was a move to standardise the appointment of committee personnel and to ensure that they were subject to civil service regulation and scrutiny. [See Memorandum by R. Ferguson 'Temporary Commissions, are they Departments of State', 13 Oct. 1877, PRO.T.7646A(16154).]

<sup>20</sup> The background files to several Royal Commissions testify both to the tenacity with which their Chairmen held to the principle of autonomy for the practice of their inquiries, and to Departmental [specifically Home Office] exploitation of this principle in their dealings with the Treasury and with individual commissions. The background files at the Public Record office on the RC on Labour [1891-94] offer a number of illustrations. See also Harrison [1995] for various references.

<sup>21</sup> The two were often interchangeable and obviously the relationship between the two varied between individuals: some women saw themselves as having a clear interest in representing women's views, but others did not.

workers,<sup>22</sup> and had acquired reputations for practical skills as well as for the strength of their moral purpose.<sup>23</sup> Committee membership was seen as an acceptable form of public activity for women, many of whom referred to it as quiet work; Eleanor Sidgwick and Emily Davies actively enjoyed it, and Louise Creighton described her pleasure in discovering her own skills as an organiser through such work.<sup>24</sup>

Women's appointments as committee members evolved from their inclusion as witnesses, which was also limited compared to male participation, since both familiarity and expediency came into play. These combined to create precedents for the appointment of women that were [and have been] consistently maintained,<sup>25</sup> and which were often accepted, and sometimes actively encouraged, by women activists.<sup>26</sup> The chapter refers mainly to the nineteenth century, but is not strictly chronological. I use evidence from Select Committees and Royal Commissions to examine first, the emergence of women as expert witnesses to committees; secondly, some of the ways in which working-class and poor women were heard by committees and the changes in their representation that culminated in the first appointments of women as assistant commissioners - to the Royal Commission on Labour [1891-94]; and, thirdly, the related but distinctive circumstances surrounding the appointment of the first women commissioners on the Royal Commission on Secondary Education [1894-96]. Parts of the first two sections cover the same periods of time, but they should be seen as interdependent rather than concurrent.

The table below shows the numbers of Royal Commissions with women witnesses and members between 1870 and 1930.

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<sup>22</sup> The nineteenth century use of the term did not imply a paid profession; for a discussion of the nature of social service as work for women in the nineteenth century see Parker [1988: 31-40], and references below. See also Frances Balfour's pamphlet [1906] 'Social Work amongst Women'.

<sup>23</sup> Octavia Hill, Mary Carpenter or Louisa Twining are among the many who could be cited as examples. See Lewis [1991a] for a general discussion of the relationship between women's public work and their sense of private responsibility, and for particular analysis of the work of individual women, including Octavia Hill. For other studies of relevant individuals see Parker [1988]; Boyd [1982]; Darley [1990]; and for the post-1918 period Eoff [1991]; Simon [1986].

<sup>24</sup> See references in chapter 2 above, p.66.

<sup>25</sup> See discussion in chapter 1, and Hennessy [1989: 12].

<sup>26</sup> See conclusion to chapter 2 and related references to Yeo [1996].



**Table 3.1****Royal Commissions of Inquiry with women witnesses and members, 1870-1930**

	No. of RCs with women witnesses	No. of RCs with women members	No. of RCs with women witnesses & members	Total no. of RCs
1870-79	3 [8.1%]	-	-	37
1880-89	13 [37.1%]	-	-	35
1890-99	9 [30%]	1	1	30
1900-09	14 [32.6%]	4	4	43
1910-19	8 [27.6%]	6	5	29
1920-29	14 [51.9%]	9	8	27

The figures in brackets show RCs with women witnesses as a percentage of all RCs in the period.

### 1. Women as expert witnesses

This section describes some of the ways in which middle-class women used committees to promote their increased involvement in various forms of work. It also shows the constraints that continued to exist and that contributed to the specific definitions of their expertise and interest. It shows how indirect and direct representation from poor women was replaced by the advocacy of middle-class women. This was linked to some of the changes in the nature of Government inquiries, which generally became more reflective of the corporate views of interests and groups, albeit expressed by individuals. The chapter examines the evolution of gendered forms of expertise and conceptions of citizenship through which many women worked with the political establishment in its regulation and education of the poor, while at the same time fighting to remove the legal and political obstacles to their own lives. Patricia Hollis [1987: 179] gives a particularly clear instance of this in her description of the work of Miss Lupton, a candidate for election to the Bradford School Board in 1882, who made speeches 'advancing both progressive views on education, and feminist views on her right to stand'.<sup>27</sup>

Women's groups continually stressed their complementary role, which entitled them to equal rights within the state: in Barbara Bodichon's frequently quoted words:

Women perform as great service to the state in bringing citizens into it as men do in preserving their lives. This is women's duty to the state which counterbalances the services men do the state a thousand times.<sup>28</sup>

Mme. Bodichon's evidence to the Royal Commission on Popular Education [1858-61] offers a further instance of the way in which women activists used statements about specifics in order to underline the general injustice of

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<sup>27</sup> One of the best known proponents of this form of pragmatic action was Emily Davies who stood for election to the London School Board as much to demonstrate that women were capable of such work as from an over-riding desire to undertake it, although this did not mean that once elected she neglected her responsibilities [Bennett, 1990: 123-30]. See also Stephen [1927], who noted that Emily Davies was not in favour of grand gestures and that she believed that 'To get women to work on mixed Committees is also very useful. It accustoms men's imagination to the spectacle of women taking part in public affairs. [Letter from Miss Davies to Barbara Bodichon, 14 Nov 1865, quoted p.109-10]. Caine [1992: 60], observes that Miss Davies' commitment to the women's movement provided an outlet for her own ambition. Hollis [1987] also indicates how women's attempts to take more responsibility for their own lives through working for others had the effect of domesticating aspects of public life, marking them out as women's concerns.

<sup>28</sup> 11 Dec., 1857, in Reed, ed. [1972].

women's position. She stated that

I believe that until the law gives a married woman a right to her own wages, and an independent legal existence, some control over her children, and social arrangements admit a woman's right to more liberty of action, that the education of girls will be miserably neglected.<sup>29</sup>

Women's duty to the state was extended and defined as they took up work in teaching, medicine, and other forms of health and social care. At the same time the complexity of urban, industrial life produced fragmentation of expertise in government and commerce with a growing acceptance of the idea that only a specialist possessed the knowledge to speak on particular subjects. Such attitudes had some advantages for women in that they could claim educational or other expertise; the disadvantages were in the segregations and divisions that took place, so that only certain areas were seen as of interest to women, with the resulting development of the idea that all women's interests were identical.

The growth of expertise in relation to the changes in nineteenth century government is examined by R.A. Buchanan [1988] in relation to engineers, and although the analogy with women should not be pushed too far, his analysis provides a useful comparison of the ways in which Government and experts co-operated. Women were not a discrete group, even though they may have been viewed as one when it suited; however much their occupations and interests may have been determined and confined by social constraints, they acquired certain, differing forms of expertise. The use of women witnesses reflected that as much as any recognition of women's growing social or professional emancipation. The developing specialisms in government and civil service work coincided with the channelling of women into particular forms of voluntary and paid work, and began to produce women experts.

Concerted action by women for their membership of Government committees was rare before the 1880s, although middle-class women had begun to make an appearance as witnesses, indicating their growing

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<sup>29</sup> Evidence to RC on Popular Education, 1861, xxi, Part V (2794-v], p.103-4. The commission took written statements from 12 women, including Mary Carpenter, Elizabeth and Louisa Twining, and from 47 men.

prominence in philanthropic social work.<sup>30</sup> The situation for such women began to change in the 1850s as they moved into public positions, usually through philanthropic, but gradually through paid professional work. In this connection they were increasingly involved as advocates for other women; at first singly, but over time through collaboration within and between groups, usually formed to focus on particular aspects of women's social or political disadvantage. There was a huge growth in campaigning associations throughout the century, which covered local, national or international issues; most recognised the value of Government [and other] inquiries as a means to state their case publicly, and as a possible influence on future policy.

One of the first sub-committees for any such organisation was usually its parliamentary or legislation committee, which advised on forthcoming measures that might affect members.<sup>31</sup> In that way, civil servants, Ministers, or potential chairmen of committees could be lobbied to include the organisation's nominees as witnesses or members. Such initiatives involved the asking of questions in the House of Commons, since even before the formation of the parliamentary sub-committee all efficient associations would probably have recruited some sympathetic Members of Parliament to their cause. The question would often invoke notions of representation, such as: 'Can the Minister assure the House that the proposed inquiry will adequately represent the interests of...?'; or 'Will there be a representative working-man/medical man on the proposed inquiry'.<sup>32</sup> Such questions contributed to the development of the idea that at least some inquiries had to be representative, and has led in this century to attempts to classify Royal Commissions as representative, expert, or impartial.<sup>33</sup> In fact unless a commission clearly had statutory duties or a

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<sup>30</sup> Prochaska [1980] has traced the ways in which women's philanthropic activity opened out professional and political opportunities. Anne Summers [1979] has argued that such activity was regarded as work for the middle class women who undertook it, and that it involved the development of considerable expertise. For women and social work in the nineteenth century see also Lewis [1991a] and [1992].

<sup>31</sup> A possible model for this and other varieties of sub-committee [eg literature, or education] was the Trades Union Congress.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, questions about the composition of the RCs on the Depression of Trade and Industry, and on the Blind, in which issues of interests and representation were raised. *Hansard*, [300], 10 Aug 1885, 1579-81.

<sup>33</sup> Clokie and Robinson [1937: 156-69]. See also discussion in chapter 1, pp. 37-38.

continuing executive function,<sup>34</sup> Governments or departments did not classify them, and often took the position that it was through witnesses rather than in its members that an inquiry might best represent particular interests.

That position was often the basis for Government refusal to appoint a woman. In 1898 a Departmental Committee into the Treatment of Inebriates was announced and both the National Union of Working Women and the Women's Liberal Federation wrote to the Home Secretary to ask for a woman to be appointed, only to be told that it was too late, but that they could send witnesses. Neither organisation had known about the committee until November, but Lady Laura Ridding had been informed that

..on Oct 3rd the committee was formed & "is now well on in its work" but that anyone we name may be allowed to give evidence - rather a different thing!!..

She added that she was trying 'by a private letter to Sir Kenelm Digby' to try to get a woman added to the committee, but concluded that

we have lost an opportunity & we must clearly take this additional work of getting wind of coming "Committees" ...Our suggestions obviously must go before the committees are formed - not after.<sup>35</sup>

The WLF were less successful; they debated the matter at their executive committee meeting of 6 December and decided to try to arrange a meeting with a member of the Departmental Committee, Dr Donkin, who was judged to be sympathetic to women's 'special interests'. They subsequently reported that he had invited them to a meeting of the whole committee but that they had been unable to attend at the time suggested and had not pursued the matter, as Dr Donkin was 'evidently unwilling to meet [them] without his Committee.'<sup>36</sup>

In the early part of the nineteenth century the representation of women through Government inquiries was overwhelmingly restricted by class; the numbers of working and lower class women who gave evidence were low compared to men of the same class, but, in however limited a way, their voices were heard. The silences were of middle-class and elite women, who from a reading of inquiry reports up to the middle of the century

<sup>34</sup> For example the various Standing Commissions into Ancient Monuments, Historical Documents; or Electoral Boundaries.

<sup>35</sup> Letter to Margaret MacDonald, 21 Nov 1898, MacDonald Mss., PRO/30/69/1375.

<sup>36</sup> Reported in *SWFN* Nov, Dec, 1898 and Feb 1899.

might have been supposed not to exist. The reports also demonstrate particular aspects of their legal and social powerlessness.<sup>38</sup> Until the 1860s few middle-class women were in paid, professional employment and they were unrepresented on inquiries dealing with matters of law and professional training, from which they were usually excluded by the terms of reference or by the methods of the inquiry.

The Royal Commissions on Marriage Laws and Divorce of 1847-50 and 1850-3 took evidence only from legal practitioners. The Commission on Marriage Laws included a number of written statements, but these were all from men. An indirect expression of a woman's views was presented through the evidence of Lord Brougham to the Divorce Commission, but even this was a copy of a statement he had submitted to an earlier inquiry. The absence of women as witnesses to inquiries into legal administration continued until the 1930s. Although women gave evidence to inquiries concerned with the reform of specific laws,<sup>39</sup> they continued to be excluded from those concerned with the general operation of the law, for example the 1934 Royal Commission into the Common Law had no female representatives either as Commissioners or witnesses, although it did have a woman Assistant Secretary.<sup>40</sup>

Women's representation on medical inquiries was also blocked by the vested interests of male professionals. The report of the Royal Commission into Medical Degrees [1881-82] briefly mentioned the registration of women as medical practitioners, in connection with the paper submitted by Elizabeth Garrett Anderson,<sup>41</sup> but concluded that 'We do not

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<sup>37</sup> Footnote deleted.

<sup>38</sup> For example the inquiries cited here on divorce and marriage, as well as those into property.

<sup>39</sup> For example, the RCs into the Contagious Diseases Acts [1870-71], or Licensing Laws [1896-99]. Isabella Tod gave evidence to the Select Committee on the Married Women's Property Bill; her testimony mainly concerned working-class women in Belfast. [1867-68, vii, (441)]

<sup>40</sup> Miss A.M. Fletcher, the first woman to hold that position on a Royal Commission.

<sup>41</sup> A summary of her paper was included as Appendix No. 4 to the report.

propose to enter further into a much disputed question'.<sup>42</sup> There were no female witnesses and those men examined on the issue of women practitioners used both the inquiry's own limits, and some complicated logic about their own delegacy, to avoid any commitment. Dr Waters gave his personal opinion that women should be admitted as licentiates of medical corporations, but stressed that he was not deputed by his professional association [The British Medical Association] to encourage their admission.<sup>43</sup> Two major public health inquiries towards the end of the century had no evidence from professional women.<sup>44</sup>

Women had slightly more success in putting forward their views to committees on the state regulation of midwifery and nursing. The 1890 Select Committee on Midwives' Registration heard evidence from six women, including Dr Mary Scharlieb, and that was an important register of the success of campaigning women's groups, particularly the Midwives Institute.<sup>45</sup> However, it was the first time that women had given expert testimony to such an inquiry and it was not until 1908 that a committee concerned with medical registration [the Departmental Committee on the Working of Midwives Act 1902] had a woman member.<sup>46</sup> The committee heard evidence from 13 women of whom eight were certified midwives, but the majority [18] of its 36 witnesses was of male doctors; no woman doctor was called. The first woman doctor to be appointed to a Government inquiry in Britain was Jane Walker in 1912.<sup>47</sup>

The choice of women to appear before committees was frequently

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<sup>42</sup> RC on Medical Degrees, 1882, xxix, C.3259-i, p.xiv. This inquiry and the Royal Commission on the University of London [1888-89] took place at a time of great agitation for women's rights and, although both had terms of reference that were sufficiently broad to encompass women's position neither discussed it extensively. See RCs on Electoral Systems [1908-10] and Selection of Justices of the Peace [1909-10] in which discussion of women was equally perfunctory.

<sup>43</sup> RC on Medical Degrees, 1882, xxix, C.3259-i, p. 159:3051.

<sup>44</sup> RCs on Vaccination 1889-97, and Tuberculosis 1890-95. The latter had no evidence from any women; the RC on Vaccination heard evidence from twelve women, all working-class, whose children had died after vaccinations.

<sup>45</sup> For the Institute and for a full account of the long struggle for the state recognition and regulation of midwifery as a profession for women, see Jean Donnison [1977].

<sup>46</sup> Mrs Georgina F. Hobhouse, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Rural Midwives Association.

<sup>47</sup> She was a member of the 1912 DC on Tuberculosis. Dr Jane Waterston and the Hon. Dr Ella Scarlett were members of the 1901 Ladies Committee of Inquiry into the Boer War Concentration Camps, but this committee was anomalous in many ways, and was also not concerned exclusively with medical matters. See below, chapter 4.

determined by their membership of philanthropic or reforming associations, and that led to the emergence of a group of prominent women who became the acknowledged experts on particular subjects and who were frequently called as witnesses, among them Octavia Hill, [housing and relief work] Mary Carpenter, [reformatory schools] and Louisa Twining [Poor Law]. All three were involved with movements or associations concerned with improving the lives of the poor, and gained confidence and expertise from such work. The committee reports emphasised their special knowledge,<sup>48</sup> and they were clearly listened to with respect; the evidence of Mary Carpenter to the 1861 Select Committee on Destitute Children extended over two days [24 and 27 June 1861], runs to over 30 printed pages, and was more substantial than that of any other witness.

Many such women held progressive views about the treatment of the poor and disadvantaged, and their work was as much a moral or ethical expression as a practical attempt to improve the lives of others. Their morality was produced and/or confirmed by their philanthropic work, and was generally in tune with prevailing ideas. However, other women took a more confrontational moral stand, and their inclusion as witnesses was more the result of their own tenacity than because they were judged to have specialist expertise in social problems. Josephine Butler and her co-campaigners in the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts<sup>49</sup> dominated women's evidence to the inquiries into the Contagious Diseases Acts, and their campaigns offer one of the first examples of women's capacity to organise and orchestrate their appearance before Government committees.<sup>50</sup> They show how some groups of women had become aware of the possibility of influencing

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<sup>48</sup> For Mary Carpenter see SC on Education of Destitute Children 1861; and for Louisa Twining the SC of the House of Lords on Poor Law Relief 1888. See also the description of Mrs Chisholm who gave evidence to the SC on Emigrant Ships [1854, xiii (164), p.161: 2974]; and of Miss Mayo and Miss Coutts in the reports of the RC on Popular Education [1858-61], [Rep., 1861, xxi, (2794-III), p.357-359].

<sup>49</sup> Formed [1869] and led by Josephine Butler. The Shield, believed it to be unique in British political history as the first political association of women, see McHugh [1980: 163]. For a brief account of the history of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the formation of the Ladies Association see Hollis [1979: 199-200].

<sup>50</sup> For another earlier example see Emily Davies' campaign organised around the RC on Schools [1864-7] which will be discussed in a following section. Women had also had considerable experience of campaigns in other forms of political activity; for instance, in Chartism [see Thompson (1993)], the anti-Corn Laws and the anti-slavery movements, see Caine [1997].



committees, and how the claims that women should represent women were becoming institutionalised as much by women as by the men who controlled the committees.

The debates surrounding the morality of the Acts and their importance for feminists in drawing attention to the injustice of the sexual double standard, and the relationship of this to the wider movement for women's emancipation, have been the subject of extensive research.<sup>51</sup> My purpose here is to note the way that an issue that directly affected working class women was represented by middle class women, and to register this as part of the evolution of a particular role for women committee members, and as an unconscious collusion<sup>52</sup> between the political establishment and the relatively privileged women who were campaigning for legal and political reform.

The ways in which one particular view of morality could dominate public discussion is shown by the backgrounds and statements of witnesses to the 1870 Royal Commission into the Contagious Diseases Acts and the Select Committee on the same subject in 1882. Thirteen women gave evidence to the Royal Commission; all were professionally or philanthropically involved with destitute women, prostitutes or those described as 'fallen women'. Only five, all of whom were involved with the campaign against the Acts,<sup>53</sup> expressed clear opposition to the Acts; the other eight, who were mostly involved in the day to day care of women in Lock Hospitals or Refuges, either approved of them, or were unwilling to give an opinion. These were the practical women experts: those who were employed as matrons and wardresses in the Lock Hospitals, the majority of whom supported the Acts, although a cynic might note the connection between the implementation of the Acts and their own continued employment. Some expressed reservations about the activities of the members of the LNA and their presence on hospital committees. Miss

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<sup>51</sup> See Walkowitz [1980 and 1992]; McHugh [1980]; Petrie [1971]; Boyd [1982], all of which also contain references to Josephine Butler's own accounts. These also have some discussion of the importance of the campaigns for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the definition of the women's movement during the late nineteenth century. For this see more specifically Banks [1990b]: 64-8; Kent [1987: chapter II, especially pp. 76-79]; Holton [1986: 10-15]; Walkowitz [1992: 65-68; and Roberts [1995].

<sup>52</sup> See Yeo [1996: 132] for another examination of this idea in her discussion of the alliances between professional men and women involved in social service work.

<sup>53</sup> This group included Josephine Butler.

Farrow was superintendent of the Lock Department at Portsmouth Hospital and had previously run an 'asylum for fallen women' in Bristol. She was asked about the way that it was run and whether its 'mixed committee of ladies and gentlemen' worked well, and replied 'As a rule I do not think ladies committees are good'.<sup>54</sup>

It is notable that the inquiry was conducted about people who were not there, and for whom no-one could claim to be truly representative.<sup>55</sup> Previous inquiries can provide no real comparison, but most major investigations into the conditions of the poor had taken evidence from the poor themselves, either directly or through the reports of assistant commissioners; for example, investigations into the conditions in prisons had included direct questioning of prisoners, with no intermediaries.<sup>56</sup> The change should not be seen as only gender-specific, as the rise of other associations such as trades unions, friendly societies and co-operative guilds meant that there was also less questioning of individual men. For women the shift had two major implications: the reinforcement of a kind of moral essentialism; and the further development of the enclave of women's issues.

That was powerfully demonstrated in Josephine Butler's statement to the 1882 Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Acts. She made a long and passionate speech condemning the sexual double standard and its institutionalisation in laws that degraded women, in this case the compulsory medical examination of women alleged to be prostitutes, and clearly presented herself as the speaker for all women.

I speak in the name of a very vast association of women in England and throughout the world, and I should not be true to that association, representing, as I do, that large body of women here today, did I not say what I feel concerning the personal insult offered to women. .... I am not here to represent virtuous women alone; I plead for the rights of the most virtuous and the most vicious equally, and I speak for the womanhood of the world. We are *solidaire* and you will find us so. .... The moral character of a woman, though it be of the lowest, does not alter the sacrilegious character of an indecent

<sup>54</sup> RC on C.D. Acts, xix, I, C.408, 399:11,807.

<sup>55</sup> Although the Select Committee in 1882 did include the testimony of Elizabeth Southey who had been arrested as a prostitute but was later acquitted. See SC Evidence, 1882, ix, (340), p.318-35.

<sup>56</sup> For example see RC into Fleet, Palace Court and Marshalsea Prisons 1815-18; RC into Ilchester Gaol 1822 and SC on King's Bench, Fleet and Marshalsea Prisons 1814-15, all of which heard evidence or took statements from male and female prisoners.

assault upon her person .... The part assigned to woman in the physiology of the race is higher, much more delicate, and more to be respected than that of man. The line of human descent is continued corporeally on the woman's side. .... Parliament cannot afford, on this question, to set aside the sentiment of the motherhood of England.<sup>57</sup>

In this speech, almost certainly rehearsed,<sup>58</sup> Mrs Butler moved from being the representative of one organisation, to that of the women of the world, and finally of the 'motherhood' of England. She provided a model for speaking about women and a convenient way of delineating their concerns.<sup>59</sup>

The practical effect of Josephine Butler's appearance before the Royal Commission and the Select Committee was to give publicity to her cause as much as to change the law, as although the Royal Commission recommended that the examination of suspected prostitutes should be stopped, it was not done and in 1882 the Select Committee recommended that the examinations should continue.<sup>60</sup> The members might have been affected by her skilful and emotional presentation, but the reports gave a more dispassionate assessment. In both cases more attention was paid to the evidence of those women who supported the Acts and whose evidence was case-specific. Arguably this could have been because the inquiry was predisposed to favour such views and the witnesses were chosen with this

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<sup>57</sup> Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1882, IX (340), 237:5379.

<sup>58</sup> Judith Walkowitz [1992: 90] analyses Mrs Butler's sense of the dramatic in her campaigns, describing her as a 'beautiful and histrionic figure ... who combined in herself the role of prophet and suffering magdalen.'

<sup>59</sup> Motherhood as practice and as icon was powerfully exploited by politicians and women activists as the nineteenth century state became more concerned with the special nature of women's citizenship. See Bodichon quoted above; Elizabeth Blackwell quoted in Banks [1990(b): 89]. Banks also discusses 'maternal mystique' as a factor in late Victorian feminist debates on women's spiritual superiority [1990(b): 95-102]. Many of the women studied here wrote extensively on the responsibilities of mothers as citizens; see Scharlieb [1905, 1912, 1915, 1929]; Creighton [1901, 1907, 1908]. Eleanor Barton [1919] and other writers of WCG pamphlets promoted the exercise of political duties through maternal or domestic ones, while Spargo [1914] emphasised the special nature of the duties of women socialists. For other accounts of the political manipulation of motherhood, see Davin [1978]; Lewis [1980(a)]; Bock & Thane [1991]; Skocpol, [1992]; Smart [1992: 11-30]; Koven and Michel, eds., [1993], especially their introduction 'Mother Worlds'. Paula Baker [1984] discusses women's political involvement as the 'domestication of politics', and argues that we need wider definitions of political action in order to understand its gendered nature. See also her more extensive examination [1991] of women's activism for some general points, although her detailed analysis concerns the United States.

<sup>60</sup> SC Report, 1882, IX (340), p.xxviii. The Acts were suspended in 1883 and finally repealed in 1886, see Bland [1995: 98-99].

in mind; the bias was then pushed further by the failure to hear from any of the women directly affected, and to have them represented only by the anecdotal evidence of a group of women clearly identified as members of an organisation devoted to the overthrow of the Acts, and thus partial.

However, within the parameters of the form, the balance of the evidence presented in the reports reflected the numerical majority of witnesses for or against the Acts; this is most easily seen in the 1882 Select Committee in which the witnesses were classified according to those who opposed the Acts and those who either supported them or were involved in their administration. The evidence of Miss Mary Anne Webb<sup>61</sup> was considerably less than that of Mrs Butler,<sup>62</sup> but was referred to more positively and at much greater length in the final report.<sup>63</sup> Her views were favoured because of her practical experience of the operation of the Acts, although her account of the approval of them by local residents was as anecdotal as was Mrs Butler's description of the treatment of the woman taken up by them. None the less the position taken by Josephine Butler was the one that received most prominence, and leaving aside considerations that this might have reflected a recognition of the moral correctness of her views, it was an important marker of the claim of middle-class women to champion such views in the name of all women; and of the association of women's expertise with that moral view.

## 2. The representation of working women through Government committees on employment

In the early years of the nineteenth century only poor, criminal, or working women appeared before Government inquiries, giving direct evidence about their work or lives. Such evidence was usually that of factory or agricultural workers who formed part of a large group who were all asked similar questions; their cumulative statements being used to build up a general picture. Women also gave evidence on behalf of their husbands, or as holders of minor local offices in their own right. However, even when the

<sup>61</sup> She was superintendent Matron at the Chatham Lock Hospital and had also given evidence to the Royal Commission in 1871 [C.408, xix, 1, p.544-47: 15,276-15,382].

<sup>62</sup> Mrs Butler's evidence extends over twelve pages [230-241] while that of Miss Webb was eight pages [408-17].

<sup>63</sup> There are six references to her evidence in the report, and only one to that of Josephine Butler.

inquiry specifically concerned women's trades, women witnesses were not in the majority, and in most cases they were always outnumbered by men.<sup>64</sup> That imbalance continued: with only very few exceptions<sup>65</sup> the number of women witnesses, like that of women committee members, has always been less than that of men.<sup>66</sup> This section uses evidence from some of the many inquiries into working conditions during the nineteenth century to show how the early representation of working women by women of their own class decreased until by the end of the century it was considered normal for them to be represented by women from the middle classes.

Some recent work on the testimony to such inquiries has been concerned to show the ways in which it supports the construction of gendered relationships in the workplace.<sup>67</sup> Other studies caution that the evidence given by working people and middle-class women must be read within the context of a form designed to disempower them.<sup>68</sup> My examination of the evidence of women workers for the examples in this chapter suggests that however their evidence has been used subsequently, they were questioned on the same subjects and in the same way as their male counterparts and, in that sense at least, were considered to be as capable as men of presenting their views to the various inquiries. Even though they were vastly outnumbered by male witnesses, they were present before the committees until middle class women replaced them.

As noted above, Mary Hatfield and Alice Meaking were the only

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<sup>64</sup> For example, the Royal Commission on Framework Knitters [1844-45] took evidence from only two women: Mary Hatfield of Derby and Alice Meaking of Nottingham. There were over 300 male witnesses.

<sup>65</sup> These mainly concerned all-women committees which are discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>66</sup> The highest number of women witnesses both absolutely, and relative to male witnesses, to any inquiry consulted for this thesis was for the RC into the Feeble-minded [1904-08], which had 42 women witnesses, all qualified and in paid or unpaid public service.

<sup>67</sup> See Rose [1992: 30-1]; Osterud [1986] uses an analysis of evidence to Government inquiries to illustrate men's attitudes towards women workers. Neither uses any women's evidence.

<sup>68</sup> Purvis [1992] notes that 'Giving information to official personnel ... must have been an intimidating experience for many working-class women, expected as they were to show deference to their "social superiors"'. There are also a number of accounts of the nervousness or fear of middle-class women when appearing before such inquiries; see N. & J. Mackenzie [1982: 231-2] for Beatrice Webb; Bennett [1990: 68-9] for Frances Buss; and Josephine Butler's evidence to the Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Acts [1882, ix, (340), 230:5281-83], although that public statement of her distress at giving evidence needs to be balanced with Petrie [1971: 115-16] who cites her claim to W.F. Cowper-Temple [one of the members of the 1870-1 Royal Commission] that she was not at all nervous.

women to give evidence to the Royal Commission on Framework Knitters [1844-45], but, like the male witnesses in similar occupations, both testified to the lowering of rates for their work as glove-seamers. Mary Hatfield employed other women and described their hours of work and pay. Most inquiries of this sort included one or two women of a similar status or background to Mrs. Hatfield, who had taken over their husbands' or fathers' work and sub-contracting arrangements. Sarah Bryan<sup>69</sup> was a middleman, who had taken over her husband's frames and employed two journeymen and her son and daughter. She stated that she was treated fairly by the master who sub-contracted the work to her and from whom she rented the frames; although no evidence was taken from her employees, who paid rent to her in their turn. She was asked whether there should be an Act of Parliament to abolish frame rents and replied 'I am sure I cannot say anything about it; we had quite as lief go on as we are ...'.<sup>70</sup>

Her reply can be interpreted in a variety of ways: as an employer for whom the current system was working well, because she received rent from her employees as well as a payment for the finished goods from the master; as an employee fearful of disrupting a set of working practices that might jeopardise her relationship with the master; or as an example of female diffidence [which might equally have been class diffidence] confronted with the pomp of the committee rooms and the assembled Members of Parliament.<sup>71</sup> No comparison can be made with the other female witness, Mary Stevens, who gave evidence about payments owed to her mother and was not herself involved in the trade. Several male witnesses gave similar responses to those of Mrs Bryan, while others expressed opinions hostile to the masters, and others said that if frame-rents were abolished it would lead to lower wages. Thus, Mrs Bryan can be seen as representative of a class of workers, her views constrained or determined by a number of factors which might have also related to her sex; but her presence at the inquiry was determined by the work that she did, rather than that she was a woman

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<sup>69</sup> One of the two female witnesses to the SC on Stoppage of Wages (Hosiery) 1854-5, xiv (421); the other was Mary Stevens.

<sup>70</sup> SC report, 518: 8994.

<sup>71</sup> The latter needs to be qualified by the very short time that the majority of witnesses spent giving their evidence. The questioning [whether of men or women] rarely involved more than a few exchanges, often for the purpose of verifying a previous written statement. As the witnesses were paid expenses for travel to London to give their evidence, it seems likely that the prospect of such a trip would have outweighed their reluctance to testify.

doing it.<sup>72</sup>

In most inquiries there was a degree of self-selection by witnesses, depending on the form of the investigation. The usual practice was for the Secretary of the inquiry to announce it in *The Times* and relevant local newspapers, and invite submissions from interested parties. These were then filtered by the Secretary and Chairman who arranged for witnesses to be brought to London,<sup>73</sup> or to appear before a locally held meeting of the inquiry.<sup>74</sup> Larger inquiries employed assistant commissioners who reported on individual regions, using a variety of methods to seek out witnesses, often relying on local knowledge. The numbers of women witnesses before such inquiries were small, but their presence shows a consistent pattern of involvement, and for some a recognition of their independent local standing. The Royal Commission on Fairs and Markets in Ireland [1854-5] took evidence from nine women out of a total of 794 witnesses. Of that nine, only two were market traders; the others were toll collectors or weigh-masters<sup>75</sup> who held office through their husbands or fathers. That pattern was repeated for Ireland in the more extensive Royal Commission into Market Rights [1887-91],<sup>76</sup> which revealed some distinctive regional differences in the class of women giving evidence. The commission appointed five assistant commissioners who investigated different areas; the report for the south-east and south-west of England contained evidence from 99 female witnesses [from a total of about 800], mainly stallholders, while that for the north and central southern area had only one [out of 461]. In Ireland, as before, the women witnesses were toll collectors or the owners of scales.

The reports can offer no more than traces of women's status through such local office, but they make clear that at least in women's appearance before state inquiries as holders of office or as employees, they were

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<sup>72</sup> This was true in a number of other cases: see women's evidence to the SC on the Employment of Children in Mills and Factories [1831-32]; the SC on Payment of Wages [1842]; the RC on Bleaching Works [1854-5].

<sup>73</sup> A possible factor in a witness's decision to volunteer [see above]: several of the witnesses to the inquiries discussed above stated that they were making their first visit to London.

<sup>74</sup> In general all Select Committees, even *ad hoc* ones, sat in London because they were committees of Parliament; Royal Commissions could hold local meetings, although in practice most were based in London.

<sup>75</sup> Johanna Whitty of Wexford described herself as a Weighmistress, RC Evidence, p. 259.

<sup>76</sup> The RC issued two reports: in 1888, C.5550, liii; and 1890-91, C.6268, xxxvii.

perceived as being equal with men of similar standing.<sup>77</sup> As Innes [1996: 15] has pointed out:

the occasional emergence of women as titular proprietors undoubtedly conceals a good deal of invisible involvement when men held the title.

Taken together, the list of occupations or employments held by women suggests the persistence of a form of representation dependent on office rather on persons. The disappearance of women giving evidence in that capacity was the result of increased regulation and professionalisation through the nineteenth century. For example, Innes observes that women were prohibited from being gaol keepers by statute in 1815, but they continued to hold positions as supervisors of female prisoners; and as cooks and innkeepers within prisons.

In a very few cases women office-holders can be described as giving expert testimony rather than merely describing their work. Martha Wall and Margaret Slater gave evidence to the Select Committee on the Regulation of Madhouses in 1814;<sup>78</sup> they were Searchers in the parish of St Leonard, Shoreditch, whose job was to view the bodies of those who had recently died in the parish and give a sworn report as to the cause of death to the parish clerk. They gave evidence as to the conditions at Sir Jonathan Miles's Madhouse, which lay within their parish, and can thus be classed as expert witnesses who testified not to specific events or conditions of employment, but who, by the nature of their work, were deemed competent to make general comments. That seemed to have been a unique example for women in inquiries of that period, and was not found again until the evidence of Mary Carpenter to the Select Committee on Destitute Juveniles in 1852.<sup>79</sup>

It was more usual for the questioning of officials to be focused on particular circumstances as in the case of Mrs Gottwaltz, Postmistress of Birmingham, who, in 1846, was examined about the numbers of objections to voters posted at her office during an election and the procedure for

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<sup>77</sup> Some of the witnesses to the RC on Markets were described as representing particular categories: for example, 'Miss Andrews of Devonport representing Butchers' ... 'Miss Bennett of Penzance representing Stallholder'. [1888, liii, 2nd report, C.5550-II]

<sup>78</sup> Rep. 1814-15, iv, (296), p.33.

<sup>79</sup> SC report and evidence, 1852, vii, (515). See also Carpenter [1881: 121-35] for the background to her appearance before the committee.



dealing with them.<sup>80</sup> She was asked the same questions as her male counterparts, and paid expenses for her attendance at the same rate.<sup>81</sup> That again reinforced the acceptance of women's presence, and of their views on topics that could hardly be narrowly defined as relating only to women.

Other women witnesses were proprietors of small businesses, or spoke for their husbands in business matters. The Royal Commission into Labour Laws [1874-75] took no direct evidence from women, but reviewed a number of cases brought under the Acts governing employment,<sup>82</sup> some of which were brought by women, either in their own right, or as representatives of their husbands.<sup>83</sup> The most consistent pattern of such evidence is demonstrated in the statements of women witnesses to inquiries into irregular voting. There were 39 Royal Commissions on Elections between 1844 and 1906, of which the majority had women witnesses;<sup>84</sup> and although most of them were required to give evidence against their husbands, or other male relatives,<sup>85</sup> the remainder testified in their own right, usually because they were the proprietors of lodging houses or inns and had observed bribes being given on their premises.<sup>86</sup>

Women's evidence to committees was none the less only a fraction

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<sup>80</sup> SC on Registration of Votes of Electors 1846, viii, (451).

<sup>81</sup> Two guineas a day; the same rate was also paid to some of the solicitors who attended the inquiry.

<sup>82</sup> The Master & Servant Act 1867 and the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1871.

<sup>83</sup> Such cases were approximately 5% of the total.

<sup>84</sup> This was also true for Select Committees on Disputed Elections; see, for example, the SC into the Election at Penryn, 1826-7. These electoral inquiries heard evidence from higher numbers of women in proportion to men than for other inquiries during this period.

<sup>85</sup> The statements of such women reveal that in many cases the man whose vote was bought was ill, or disabled and the sale of his vote was important in helping to provide for his family which, given the numbers of inquiries, suggests that elections were of some utility in both domestic and local economies. See, for example, statement of Mrs Catherine Saunders to the RC into the St Albans Election [1852: xxvii, (1431), p.425]. There appears to have been little detailed examination, in recent historical accounts, of the testimony to such post-Reform Act inquiries. For one re-evaluation of voters' behaviour before 1832, see O'Gorman [1984].

<sup>86</sup> Other inquiries indicated the widespread practice of women voting on behalf of their husbands. The evidence of Mr Fry to the Select Committee on the Election of Poor Law Guardians in 1878, explained that the system as amended in 1874 and 1877 provided for the voting papers to be delivered and collected to and from the homes of voters. This had led to wives filling up voting papers and signing their husbands' names '...sometimes with an authority from them, but ... in nine cases out of ten, without any authority at all; and I remember at Yarmouth an immense number of voting papers were found invalid on that ground. The husbands being at sea fishing at the time, their wives filled up the papers, and they expressed the greatest astonishment when it was pointed out to them that it was not valid ...'. [Report, 1878, xvii, (297), 5: 37.]

of that given by men; in many inquiries women's or children's views were represented only by men. The 1831 Select Committee on the Employment of Children took evidence from three women about their employment as children, but the majority of the witnesses were men who testified about their children.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the evidence of men and women was often taken by assistant commissioners who were not bound to give full transcripts. In the case of the 1857 Select Committee on Dyeing Works women were at a double remove. The committee took no evidence from women workers, and its first witness was H.S. Tremenheere, who described his procedure when compiling his 1855 report for the Royal Commission on Bleaching Works.<sup>88</sup> He had not called witnesses but had visited various works and factories taking evidence from owners and working people. This was read back to the person who gave it

...and, in the case of that of the work-people, read over also to someone in authority on the spot, for their objections, or their assent to its correctness.<sup>89</sup>

Changes in the type of evidence and the class distinctions between working women talking of their own experience and other women talking for them became explicit with the appointment of four women assistant commissioners to the Royal Commission on Labour in 1892. That was a powerful demonstration of middle class women's success in organising and claiming to speak for poorer women, and a measure of the progress made by the Women's Trades Union League [formerly Women's Protection and Provident League] as the accepted advocate of women workers.<sup>90</sup> The shift that gave rise to the appointments had been underway since the 1870s and can be seen in the class background of the women witnesses to the Royal Commission on the Factory and Workshop Acts [1875-76]. That was the first inquiry into labour or employment matters with substantial numbers of middle class women as witnesses; they included the President of the WPPL,

<sup>87</sup> A few women gave similar testimony. It should also be noted that this committee showed a marked contrast to a previous one of 1816 when no working people gave evidence. [SC on Children Employed in Factories, 1816, iii (397)].

<sup>88</sup> Report, *PP*, 1854-5, xviii, (1943).

<sup>89</sup> SC on Dyeing Works, 1857, xi.2, (259), p.vii.

<sup>90</sup> For brief details of the League, see above, p. 58; and for more detailed accounts, Drake [1984: 10-25]; Goldman [1974]; Soldon [1985]; Boston [1987: 30-59]. Lady Dilke also wrote several articles about trades unionism for women and the role of the WTUL, formerly the Women's Protective and Provident League: [1889, 1891(a)].

Emma Paterson,<sup>91</sup> and various members of the National Union of Working Women.<sup>92</sup> The commission heard evidence from a total of 64 women, of whom 37 were from the working class, as described by their trades, making it the last British commission to hear evidence from large numbers of working women.

Deborah Thom has noted the predominance of middle class women in the formation and administration of women's trades unions; and that such women went on to represent working women on Trade Boards.<sup>93</sup> Her argument that

Working women's organisations of the nineteenth century were shaped more by the interests of social reformers than by the demands of working women themselves<sup>94</sup>

is further supported by the choice of the women who served on committees in various capacities as representatives of working women, nearly all of whom were involved with women's unions, and were part of a group which worked directly or indirectly with the WPPL/WTUL, and its influential president Emilia Dilke.

That dominance was reflected in the appointments of the women assistant commissioners [May Abraham, Clara Collet, Margaret Irwin, and Eliza Orme], all of whom were, or had been, involved with the WPPL/WTUL, although that was not the only determining factor in their appointments. The terms of reference of the Labour Commission were wide, its procedures labyrinthine, and it was indirectly involved in various struggles for the control of the Government administration of labour matters<sup>95</sup> within which women's issues were of relatively low priority.

<sup>91</sup> It should be noted that Mrs Paterson's background was not one of middle-class affluence, and she had neither the family background nor the financial security of her colleagues on the WPPL executive. For a discussion of her class position see Harrison [1992: 13-14].

<sup>92</sup> This was the association from which the later NUWW drew its name, although by the 1890s it had dropped its original links to trades unionism. The first National Union was founded in Bristol in mid-1874 with the objectives of enabling women to form unions '...to maintain their proper value in the labour market...', and to monitor Acts of Parliament that might affect women workers. A second branch had been formed in Dewsbury with about 1500 members, but its representatives were unable to inform the commission of the total membership. Their Secretary, H.M. Hunt, had represented women workers at the TUC before Congress voted to admit women delegates in 1876.

<sup>93</sup> In John [1986:274-5].

<sup>94</sup> In John [1986: 261].

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, correspondence between A.J. Mundella and W.E. Gladstone on the creation of a separate Ministry of Labour, especially 9 June, 1892 [Add. Mss.44258, f.274]; Davidson [1972: 233-4]

There had been some attempts to have women included as full commissioners, with questions asked in the House of Commons by W. Summers, and James Bryce. On the first occasion W.H. Smith, replying for the Government, was non-committal, and announced that 'the Government will carefully consider all suggestions that may be made to them as to the constitution of the Royal Commission on Labour'.<sup>96</sup> That fuelled the rumour that Beatrice Potter [Webb] was to be chosen, a prospect which appalled her.<sup>97</sup> However, when Smith was subsequently asked by Bryce whether the Government would consider the appointment of women

having regard both to the large extent to which working women and their trade organisations are interested in any amendments to the laws relating to labour ... and to the fact that some of the questions ..... affect working women and children in a special and peculiar way..,

he gave a categorical refusal stating that 'all interests will doubtless be fully represented'.<sup>98</sup>

In April 1891, Beatrice Potter offered her services to the commission: as a subordinate secretary to inquire into female labour ... [to] give me an opportunity of showing that a woman can do thorough work...<sup>99</sup>

but at this time Lord Hartington, the chairman of the Commission, was still negotiating over the appointments of the Secretary<sup>100</sup> and the first of the male assistant commissioners, and there was no further discussion regarding women until later in the year. However, women were appointed

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<sup>96</sup> See *Hansard*, [351], 6 March 1891, 437-438.

<sup>97</sup> *Diaries*, 7 March 1891. [Mackenzie, 1982: 353.]

<sup>98</sup> *Hansard*, [351], 16 March 1891, 1065-6. See *passim* above for a discussion of the DC on Inebriate Reformatories, and the representation of interests through witnesses to inquiries.

<sup>99</sup> *Diaries*, 17 April 1891. [Mackenzie, 1982: 354.]

<sup>100</sup> Following the usual practice Hartington was allowed some say in the choice of Secretary, although his suggestions for the post [including the proposal that it should be given to his private secretary, Bernard Holland] were not taken up. The Board of Trade had proposed John Burnett, its Labour Correspondent, while the Treasury had recommended Geoffrey Drage, a barrister and protégé of Lord Salisbury. The Prime Minister's office had assumed that Drage would be Secretary with Burnett as his assistant, but the Home Office referred the matter to Lord Hartington who decided on a joint appointment. However, it was made clear to him that the appointments of assistant commissioners were not the business of the commission, although they could make recommendations. [See PRO.HO.9837/B10296, Henry Matthews (Home Secretary) to Lord Hartington 11 April 1891.]

as clerks,<sup>101</sup> the first time for a Royal Commission,<sup>102</sup> although it is not clear whether the reasons for their employment were progressive or merely economic. Geoffrey Drage, the Treasury-backed Secretary, ambiguously described their employment as a 'highly successful innovation' in his report;<sup>103</sup> in earlier correspondence requesting additional staff, he pointed out that he had high testimonials for 'several ladies .. of high scholastic distinction at the Universities' and that

It would be impossible to obtain men possessing such qualifications at the salary of £150 per annum, the lowest sum for which they will undertake the work.<sup>104</sup>

The women clerks were consistently paid less than their male colleagues, a practice which was followed for the four female assistant commissioners when they were appointed in February 1892.<sup>105</sup>

The appointment of female assistant commissioners was rumoured during October and November 1891, following Lady Dilke's *Fortnightly Review* article in which she argued that the commission's current inquiry procedures would not give a true picture of the extent and nature of women's employment.<sup>106</sup> The *Daily Chronicle* added to the debate by suggesting that Mrs Byles of Bradford should investigate the textile industry; Beatrice Potter and Miss Routledge the London and provincial trades respectively, with May Abraham to report on miscellaneous industries.<sup>107</sup> Drage issued a statement denying the reports, claiming that they were '..wholly devoid of foundation..<sup>108</sup>

The final impetus for the women's appointments came from Panel C of the commission,<sup>109</sup> chaired by A.J. Mundella, and including Leonard

<sup>101</sup> Of the 27 clerks, 21 were women and of these 13 had studied at Oxford or Cambridge; of the male clerks only three were Oxbridge graduates; presumably because of the low pay offered, few men were willing to apply [see Drage, quoted below].

<sup>102</sup> This was recorded by Dorothea Beale in her 'Postscript' to Fawcett [1894] in which she listed the range of occupations available to university educated women.

<sup>103</sup> Secretary's Report, 1894, xxxv, C.7421-1, annex to the final report of the commission.

<sup>104</sup> Drage to Home Office, 7 Dec 1891, T.1/8614B.

<sup>105</sup> The precedent used to establish their pay rates was an important one in ensuring the future lower levels of women's civil service pay. See below, pp. 129-130.

<sup>106</sup> Dilke, 1891[b]: 535-38.

<sup>107</sup> 2 Oct. 1891, quoted in *Women's Trade Union Review* (3), Oct. 1891.

<sup>108</sup> *The Times*, 14 Nov 1891, p. 10.

<sup>109</sup> The commission had divided into three sub-committees to cover the inquiry's wide terms of reference. Panel C dealt with the Textiles, Clothing, Chemical, Building, and Miscellaneous Trades.

Courtney, both of whom supported women's emancipation, and were persuaded that issues concerning women's and children's labour should be investigated by women. The Panel used its examination of the commission's only women witnesses<sup>110</sup> to gauge women's support for the appointment of women assistant commissioners, with inconclusive results. That might have been because they used the same occasion to ask the witnesses for their views on the permanent appointment of women factory inspectors<sup>111</sup> which led to some confusion. Only Mrs Amie Hicks [of the East London Ropeworkers Union] was unequivocally in favour of the appointments of women assistant commissioners;<sup>112</sup> Miss Elizabeth Mears [Union of Upholstresses] and Miss Clara James [Confectioners' Trade Union] were opposed.<sup>113</sup> Miss James was asked by Leonard Courtney:

On the whole, you think it is better that representative working women should come here and tell us their story? - Yes, I do think so.

She also said that if women were employed as commissioners they should be working women '... not ladies who do not understand the trade...'.<sup>114</sup>

Clementina Black agreed with the appointment of women to investigate those trades in which there was no prior women's union organisation, and referred to Clara Collet's<sup>115</sup> work for the Booth survey<sup>116</sup> as an example of

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<sup>110</sup> This took place over two days: 1st and 2nd December 1891. Only four of the commission's 593 witnesses were women. Three of them [Mrs Hicks, Miss James and Miss Black] were members of the radical Women's Trade Union Association, and had been involved in the campaign to organise women workers in the East End of London during the late 1880s. See Drake [1984: 28-29] and Hutchins [1978: 128-130].

<sup>111</sup> The campaign for a women's factory inspectorate had begun during the 1870s and was supported by the WPPL/WTUL despite its general opposition to state interference [see Rose, 1991: 44]. For a history of the women's inspectorate see McFeely [1988], although she does not discuss the double-edged campaign by Emma Paterson and the WPPL to persuade both the Home Office and the TUC of the need for women inspectors. This can be traced through the proceedings of the TUC Annual Congresses and accounts in the *Women's Union Journal*, and is briefly referred to in Goldman [1974] and Boston [1987: 34].

<sup>112</sup> RC Evidence, 1892, xxxv, C.6708-vi, 334:8251-52.

<sup>113</sup> Miss Mears added that she was in favour of women inspectors.

<sup>114</sup> RC Evidence, 1892, xxxv, C.6708-vi, 355:8639.

<sup>115</sup> For a recent assessment of her work, see Groenewegen [1994].

<sup>116</sup> Charles Booth [1840-1916] was a Liverpool businessman whose investigations into the lives of working-class Londoners were published in the 17 volumes of *The Life and Labour of the People in London*. The survey had a wide impact and had involved as researchers many men and women who rose to influential positions within state service. The survey archives have been the subject of considerable recent scholarly interest; see, for example, O'Day and Englander [1993]; Englander and O'Day [1995]. For an account of Booth's investigators see Bales [1996].

what sub-commissioners might do.<sup>117</sup>

The Panel's resolution to employ women assistant commissioners was followed by an article in the *Manchester Guardian*, describing the four women who were appointed, even though this had not yet been officially confirmed,<sup>118</sup> and which concluded:

It is in every way fitting that study of this kind should be undertaken by women of comparative wealth and leisure in the interests of their poorer sisters.<sup>119</sup>

The comments about their comparative wealth were no doubt intended to point up their privileged position against that of the working women they represented, but they were considerably less privileged than their male colleagues on the commission, who were paid at a higher rate.<sup>120</sup>

The issue of the women's pay led to the articulation of an important precedent which helped to establish the principle of unequal pay for women in Government service. Sir R. Welby<sup>121</sup> noted that

With regard to the Lady Assistant Comm<sup>rs</sup> it should be remembered that we are *fixing a precedent* [my italics] and £300 a year appears to me high. These assistant comm<sup>rs</sup> are taken from Professions & they plead, which we cannot gainsay, that it interferes with their professional prospects. This cannot be said of women, who apart from teaching have little other professional career. I should have thought 200 or at outside £250 would be a woman's rate. At the same time I am not one of those who want to reduce women's pay below what is perfectly fair.<sup>122</sup>

In his official reply he recommended salaries of £20 a month,<sup>123</sup> making a direct comparison with teaching:

Education is no doubt the work to which Ladies as a rule devote themselves and My Lords have some cause to doubt whether Assistant Mistresses at High Schools get salaries much in excess of

<sup>117</sup> RC Evidence, 1892, xxxv, C.6708-vi, 366:8872.

<sup>118</sup> A Home Office file note of 6 Feb 1892 and Sir R. Welby's letter 20 Feb 1892, cited below, show that Drage had circumvented the procedure previously laid down by Henry Matthews and had offered the appointments and made them public before either the Home Office or the Treasury had sanctioned them.

<sup>119</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Feb 1892.

<sup>120</sup> See Drage, quoted above, p. 127.

<sup>121</sup> Sir Reginald Earle Welby [1832-1915], Permanent Secretary at the Treasury 1885-94, created Baron Welby in 1894; became chairman of the London County Council in 1900.

<sup>122</sup> File note of 5 Feb 1892, T1/8675/B15072.

<sup>123</sup> Eliza Orme, who was appointed the Senior Lady Commissioner received £25 a month.

£120 a year.<sup>124</sup>

In the same letter he also registered Treasury concern at the appointment of extra assistant commissioners whether male or female, and different precedents were invoked to limit the pay of the men; both in the case of secretaries and assistant commissioners there was often considerable investigation of individual cases.<sup>125</sup>

The important point in the case of the women, as Welby had realised, was the need to establish a basis for paying the lowest rate possible, in order to create a precedent for their future employment; thus rather than taking for comparison either the work that they were doing, or an equivalent civil service grade, their pay was linked to the profession which was judged to employ the highest number of women.<sup>126</sup> Education became the representative profession so that for these purposes women were judged as a class, rather than as individuals. The precedent set here could then be applied across other civil service appointments, so that for example, the first women appointed to the factory inspectorate were paid at the same rate as the Labour Commission's assistant commissioners, rather than at that of the few women who had earlier been appointed as inspectors for the Education Department and the Local Government Board, whose cases were considered to have been unique.<sup>127</sup> The impact of the appointments thus had long-term consequences for other professional women quite apart from those for the four assistant commissioners.

The work of the assistant commissioners confirmed women's abilities in such investigations, and led to the establishment of the first women's factory inspectorate at the Home Office, headed by May Abraham, which provided civil service employment for a number of middle-class women at conveniently established low rates of pay. The women's reports generally met with approval as the fullest inquiry into women's working conditions ever undertaken by a British Government; even Beatrice Webb, in her

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<sup>124</sup> Sir R. Welby to Sir Henry Matthews, 20 February 1892, T1/8675B/15072.

<sup>125</sup> For some examples, see Harrison [1995].

<sup>126</sup> Of the four women only Clara Collet had ever worked as a teacher. Eliza Orme held the degree of LLB, and had been practising as a conveyancer immediately prior to her appointment to the Royal Commission. May Abraham worked for the women's trades union movement. Only Margaret Irwin was not in paid employment, but she was involved in trades unionism and other organisations and campaigns relating to women's employment.

<sup>127</sup> Welby, file note of 5 Feb 1892, cited above, p. 129.



condemnation of the work of the commission, conceded some faint praise.<sup>128</sup>

The views of working women on the reports do not seem to have been widely recorded in such publications as the *Women's Union Journal*, even though it was biased in favour of Miss Abraham and her colleagues. Clearly the women, like the other assistant commissioners, had not been asked for their opinions. They were required to report only on women's labour and thus did not represent women workers in either the same way as trades union officials, or the various witnesses to this and other inquiries, although they may have had strong views about the ways in which conditions should be improved and these views might have affected their reports.<sup>129</sup> They were also likely to have been influenced by, and concerned in, many of the other issues raised by the Labour Commission, not least the creation of the women's department of the Home Office factory inspectorate, and a separate Labour Department.<sup>130</sup> They also wanted to establish their own professional status by showing that women could perform such investigations as well as men, and their work was judged in that light. That was not unique as all women breaking into previously male work have to undergo such comparisons; it can equally be seen as part of a wider justification strategy in which administrators promote bureaucratic and social reforms in tandem with the establishment of their own careers.<sup>131</sup>

The women assistant commissioners were appointed to undertake a specific piece of work and thus their position was not the same as those women appointed as members of committees or inquiries, who had a wider representative role, albeit one which remained largely confined to presenting or elucidating women's views. The assistant commissioners had secured an important and precedential role for women on such inquiries, but one that in itself further polarised questions concerning women and children, making it harder for women to be seen as having expertise in

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<sup>128</sup> B. Webb [1894:9-10].

<sup>129</sup> See here particularly the claims by Margaret Irwin that parts of her report on Scottish conditions had been suppressed by the Senior Lady Assistant Commissioner, Eliza Orme. [Correspondence in PRO.HO45/9837/10296.152.] This led to a permanent split between Miss Irwin and the London based WTUL which can be partially traced in her correspondence with Margaret MacDonald [see MacDonald Mss. PRO.30/69] although Mrs MacDonald seems to have been careful to remain neutral. For Margaret Irwin see Lewenhak [1977: 101-13].

<sup>130</sup> See Davidson, [1972:233, note 26].

<sup>131</sup> See Rosenberg [1966: 205-6].

any other areas, or for individual working women to speak directly of their own experience.

### 3. The Royal Commission on Secondary Education

The appointment of three women to this inquiry in March 1894 was the first of its kind in the British state, and demonstrates the combination of traditional authority with new forms of expertise, with Lady Frederick Cavendish as representative of aristocratic wisdom; Dr Sophie Bryant as the educated and impressively qualified professional expert; and Mrs Eleanor Sidgwick, who embodied elements of both in her elite background,<sup>132</sup> and in her research and administrative skills. It was also a reflection of women's wide involvement in education, and a confirmation that this was now clearly delineated as an area suited for women.<sup>133</sup> It showed the ease with which some women could be absorbed into the committee system, once a political decision had been made to appoint them. The committee form itself enabled them to be incorporated, partly because of the informal ways in which it had become more representative, but also because no formal decision had ever been made to exclude women.<sup>134</sup>

The inclusion of middle-class women as witnesses and then as members of education inquiries was affected both by women's own agency in mounting specific campaigns, such as Mary Carpenter's work with the Ragged and Reformatory Schools movement<sup>135</sup> or the various associations for the improvement of girls' and women's education,<sup>136</sup> and by the parallel rise in the numbers of women teachers at all levels of the system. Their participation did not displace working women in the ways discussed in the previous section, but it marked the opening of a new area of public activity for women.<sup>137</sup>

One of the first women to give evidence to an education inquiry was

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<sup>132</sup> Her mother was Lady Blanche Cecil before her marriage to James Balfour.

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, Welby's comments cited above, pp. 129-130.

<sup>134</sup> See above, chapter 1, p. 19.

<sup>135</sup> That work led to her appearance as a witness to a number of inquiries, for example the Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children [1861].

<sup>136</sup> For example, the Girls' Public Day School Trust or the Yorkshire Ladies Council for Education; Lucy Cavendish was involved with both. See also Kamm [1971].

<sup>137</sup> That was partially true for the middle-class women members of inquiries into industrial or employment matters, but their careers were often based on their ability to represent working women and committee work was an essential component of such representation, while women's work on education committees was more often determined by their qualifications and status within the profession.

Mrs M'lan, the Head of the Female School of Design,<sup>138</sup> who testified in 1849<sup>139</sup> about the conditions of entry to the school and registered her opposition to its removal to premises she considered unsuitable. In the sense that she was testifying about women and girls she could be described as representative of women, but the conditions were specific; the school was being investigated because it was one of several similar schools of design, and as Head she was its official representative. She was thus speaking of her own work-related experience, and the result of the inquiry was of direct and material concern to her, like the workers or business-holders in the inquiries into factory conditions or Labour Laws discussed above.

The campaign by Emily Davies to have girls' schools investigated by the Taunton Commission included working teachers, such as Frances Buss, and women activists such as Barbara Bodichon and other members of the group known as the Langham Place Circle.<sup>140</sup> The campaign is described in Daphne Bennett's biography of Emily Davies;<sup>141</sup> and in most histories of female education in nineteenth century England.<sup>142</sup> Miss Davies' importance as a strategist within the women's movement has also been explored by Barbara Caine.<sup>143</sup> For Caine, Emily Davies

typifies [the] kind of woman ... [who] was primarily concerned with the plight of single middle-class women in a society which emphasized women's familial and reproductive role.<sup>144</sup>

Several writers claim Emily Davies as one of the group described as 'mid-Victorian feminists', highlighting her place in the emancipation of women. Her successful lobbying of the Taunton Commission is seen by Bennett as 'a gigantic step forward', and as 'recognition [of the cause of female emancipation] in the highest quarters',<sup>145</sup> in that she and her colleagues persuaded the commission to investigate girls' schools. Emily Davies

<sup>138</sup> This was established in 1842-3 under the auspices of the Board of Trade.

<sup>139</sup> Select Committee on School of Design, 1849, xviii (576).

<sup>140</sup> For this group see Lacey [1987].

<sup>141</sup> Bennett [1990], Chapter 5: 'Spoiled Children of Fortune'.

<sup>142</sup> One of the fullest accounts and on which others have drawn is that of Josephine Kamm (1965). See also Fletcher [1980], p.18-19; Bryant [1979: 98] Turner [1974:103-4]. With the exception of Fletcher all are inclined to give more weight to activities of Miss Davies and her friends in the commission's investigation of girls' education than to the efforts of the assistant commissioners.

<sup>143</sup> Caine [1992: Chapter 3].

<sup>144</sup> Caine [1992:60].

<sup>145</sup> Bennett [1990: 66].

herself was very affected by her appearance before the commission, believing it to be the first time that women had done so, a point also made in Kamm [1965]:

It was one of the first occasions on which a woman had been invited to give evidence before a Royal Commission, and Miss Buss in particular was exceedingly nervous.<sup>146</sup>

However, it was hardly a breakthrough, as women's expertise in this and other areas had already been recognised, as has been shown in the examples cited above. Although it might have been the first time that middle-class women had given evidence at a formal sitting of a Royal Commission, working-class women had frequently done so.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, by the 1860s there had been a number of middle class women witnesses to various inquiries. The 1858 Newcastle Commission had instructed its assistant commissioners that

You must remember that questions relating to the education of women must be answered in part by persons of their own sex;<sup>148</sup>

and included the evidence of women described as respected in their field.<sup>149</sup>

In fact, Emily Davies' campaign might not have been necessary since there was nothing in the terms of reference of the commission that would have excluded girls' schools. She had written to Lord Lyttelton on the subject in 1864 and had received the reply that he understood that girls' education was to form part of the inquiry.<sup>150</sup> The principle that girls' schools should be included was already accepted, and most accounts of the matter mention that she began her lobbying as the result of a rumour that they would not be included. Fletcher's description of the involvement of many of the commissioners and assistant commissioners in the cause of female

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<sup>146</sup> Kamm [1965:203]. An earlier biography of Miss Davies also refers to this incident, describing it as the first time women gave evidence before a Royal Commission and emphasising Emily Davies' sense of the importance of the occasion. [Stephen, 1927]

<sup>147</sup> See various references cited above, pp. 113-124.

<sup>148</sup> RC on Popular Education, 1861, xxi, 2794-i-vi.

<sup>149</sup> A Miss Mayo was described as having a 'great reputation as an educational authoress, as well as her experience in teaching at the Home and Colonial Schools, [which] entitle her opinion to the greatest weight.'; while Miss Coutts was 'a lady, whose munificent support of education among the poor, as well as her personal devotion of time and labour to the cause, entitle her opinions to no ordinary respect'. RC on Popular Education, 1861, xxi, 2794-i-vi, Part III, p.357 and p.359, respectively.

<sup>150</sup> 11 Oct 1864, Emily Davies Papers, Box V, ED/SIC.2.

education reinforces the view that Lord Lyttelton had correctly interpreted the terms of reference.<sup>151</sup>

Emily Davies' influence was greatest in the questions to be asked by the commission. She corresponded with H.J. Roby, its Secretary, over the circulars to be sent out, and he sent her a copy of the Instructions to assistant commissioners for her comments. His letters to her are helpful and obviously supportive, drawing her attention to points in previous inquiries that she had missed or misinterpreted.<sup>152</sup>

In the 1850s Mary Carpenter had also corresponded with potential members of committees and had used her social and work-related contacts to further the cause of the Reformatory School movement.<sup>153</sup> Such forms of consultation were a major advance and were not often repeated as they depended both on individual persistence and on the interest and goodwill of those in charge of the administration of the inquiry. Emily Davies used a combination of public and private pressure, organising petitions and memorials from influential men and women, as well as writing personal letters to the commissioners and assistant commissioners, several of whom she already knew.<sup>154</sup> Her campaign's significance for the cause of women's emancipation lies more in that mobilisation of opinion and the precedent it set, than in the claims that it was instrumental in having girls' schools investigated, as the commission was almost certainly going to investigate them without any pressure from outside. The important point was that Emily Davies and her colleagues were able to manipulate the form that the inquiry was to take, using many of the same methods as men of her class, and that reinforced women's claims for representation on committees.

Sir Charles Dilke had proposed the appointment of Octavia Hill as a member of the Royal Commission on Working Class Housing in 1884, but her appointment had been blocked by the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt.<sup>155</sup> There had been some discussion about the appointment of women to the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor in late 1892 after

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<sup>151</sup> Fletcher [1980].

<sup>152</sup> Emily Davies Papers, ED/SIC.12, 21 March 1865; SIC/17, [28 Nov] 1865.

<sup>153</sup> See Carpenter [1881].

<sup>154</sup> For example, Lord Lyttelton and the Secretary H.J. Roby. Fletcher [1980: 19-20] notes the importance of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science as a link. See also McGregor [1981]. Emily Davies was among its women members and spoke at several of its conferences.

<sup>155</sup> See Darley [1990: 225-26].

pressure from various women's groups, especially the Women's Liberal Federation.<sup>156</sup> Their request was refused, in part, as Matthew has noted, because of Gladstone's views on women's proper place,<sup>157</sup> but equally because to accede to the demands of women to be appointed would have made it difficult to refuse to appoint clerical members. Gladstone wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury [E.W. Benson] that

The categories under which strong recommendations are urged upon us for enlarging the body [including the ladies who exhibit an energetic activity] are so numerous, & with so much apparent support, that we are in sight of the danger of converting our Commn. into a little Parliament.<sup>158</sup>

He wrote to Fowler that

you & I are politically competent to decline their aid, but if we think it should be accepted, the acceptance would be so much of a measure in itself that we should have to consult the Cabinet: & I doubt whether the C. would agree.<sup>159</sup>

The WLF continued to urge the appointment of women and at its Annual Meeting of 30 May 1893 passed a unanimous resolution:

that in view of the fact that Ministers are reluctant to act without precedent by appointing women on Royal Commissions, this Council urges that if necessary a measure be introduced into Parliament to enable women to serve as Royal Commissioners.<sup>160</sup>

Such a bill would have been unlikely to succeed, but, none the less, the potential for manipulation of future inquiries, if particular groups were granted a legal right to be represented, might well have ensured women's [or clergymen's] inclusion on the next appropriate commission, and offers an explanation [albeit partial and speculative] for the lack of official discussion of their appointment to the Royal Commission on Secondary Education.

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<sup>156</sup> Lady Carlisle and Lady Aberdeen had visited H.H. Fowler in December 1892. See Matthew [1994: 161]; and Annual Report of Women's Liberal Federation for 1893.

<sup>157</sup> Matthew [1995: 364].

<sup>158</sup> 8 December 1892, cited in Matthew [1994:161]. As well as the practical difficulties for such large bodies of arriving at a report, there were also financial considerations. The RC on Labour, appointed by the previous Conservative administration, had not yet completed its investigations and had already become the most costly Royal Commission in recent times. It had 27 members and that might have had some bearing on Gladstone's concern to limit the composition of the RC on the Aged Poor to 'public men' rather than 'on the representation of class'. [Matthew (1994), as above.]

<sup>159</sup> Matthew [1994:161].

<sup>160</sup> WLF Reports 1893; resolution moved by Mrs Price Hughes and seconded by Mrs Mallet.

Although the commission itself was much discussed, as are most commissions in the months leading up to their formation, the issue of whether or not it was to have women members received less parliamentary attention than the Royal Commission on Labour, although several women's groups, including both the Women's National Liberal Association and the WLF, urged the inclusion of women.<sup>161</sup>

There had been a series of linked initiatives for an inquiry into secondary education during 1893, with a large number of petitions to the Education Department from individual school boards,<sup>162</sup> and several conferences on the subject. One was held at Oxford in October 1893 and brought together several of those who were later to be members of the commission: Michael Sadler, Richard Jebb, and Sophie Bryant. The Department of Education had been invited to send a representative, but declined,<sup>163</sup> and announced the appointment of the Royal Commission in late November 1893. Acland was able to organise the commission with more than usual autonomy: Gladstone was ill and largely preoccupied with his resignation [which was made public on the day after the appointments to the commission were announced];<sup>164</sup> he did not seem to have taken a great interest in educational matters;<sup>165</sup> and education generally had relatively low status in the departmental hierarchy. There is no record of any correspondence between Gladstone and Acland on the subject,<sup>166</sup> nor any indication of Cabinet discussions about the precedent of women's

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<sup>161</sup> Letter from the Hon. Sec. of WNLA, Mrs Broadley Reid, 20 Feb 1894. [ED12/13]. Resolution of WLF, 22 Feb 1894. [See p. 79, above, for details of the differences between the two associations.]

<sup>162</sup> There were at least 28 of these between 1892-94: the first from the London School Board of 11 April 1892, and the last from the Wakefield School Board, 7 Feb 1894. By the time of the 13th, an official asked 'Is this a stereotyped form of Memorial?' [5/12/93, Note on the back of petition from Oldham School Board, ED/12/13.]

<sup>163</sup> The Permanent Secretary, George Kekewich, had received an invitation for himself and three colleagues, but advised Acland, the Vice-President of the Board, that as the proceedings were to be published, it would be 'most undesirable' that anyone from the Department should speak. [11 Aug 1893, ED9/20.]

<sup>164</sup> Possibly a calculated move by Acland and Kekewich to minimise the attention given to the membership of the inquiry.

<sup>165</sup> Lucy Cavendish recorded a conversation between herself and H.A. Bruce [1st Baron Aberdare] who had said 'there was only 1 subject on which Uncle W. did not seem well up and interested, viz., National Education!' [Bailey [1927] *Diaries*, 19 March 1899.]

<sup>166</sup> The correspondence between Gladstone and Bryce for the relevant period also has no mention of the Royal Commission [see Bryce Mss. 10-12].

appointments.<sup>167</sup> When Acland wrote asking James Bryce to be chairman he gave him no information about the proposed members, saying only that 'there will be I hope some really interesting people on the Commission'. In Bryce's reply he made it clear that he had not been consulted on the membership:

Were the other Commissioners to be selected by anyone but yourself I should have inquired about them, but I feel so sure you will choose men of broad views who are prepared to handle the subject in a complete & drastic way that I feel no anxiety on that score....<sup>168</sup>

As well as Bryce and the three women the other members were Sir John Hibbert, the Hon. Rev. Edward Lyttelton, Sir Henry Enfield Roscoe, the Very Rev. Edward Maclure; Rev. Dr Andrew Fairbairn, Professor Richard Jebb, Richard Wormell, Henry Hobhouse, Michael Sadler, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, George Cockburn, Charles Fenwick, and James Yoxall.<sup>169</sup>

Gillian Sutherland [1973: 313] has pointed out that Acland's strong commitment to educational reform was constrained by various political considerations; but his choices for the commission suggest that he had been able to assemble a group of people who largely shared his progressive views. The members were all committed to the extension of education, and believed in its importance as a moral force.<sup>170</sup> Their own backgrounds and educations were far more varied than had been the case for previous education commissions which were dominated by members who had attended Oxford or Cambridge.<sup>171</sup> The commission was also remarkable in its bias towards non-conformity: Bryce himself was a Presbyterian who had

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<sup>167</sup> There are no references to the matter in Matthew's exhaustive footnotes to Gladstone's diaries, although that does not mean that there were no family or other conversations, especially as Spencer Lyttelton [brother of Lucy Cavendish and Edward Lyttelton] was Gladstone's secretary. Spencer's reply to Oscar Browning's request for a place on the commission stressed the Prime Minister's public distance from the appointments: 'Of course we have nothing to do here with the composition of the Education Commission ...'. 1 Feb 1894 [Browning Mss, King's College, Cambridge.]

<sup>168</sup> Bryce Mss.161: f.1-2 Acland to Bryce 30 Jan 1894; f.3 Bryce to Acland, 1 Feb 1894.

<sup>169</sup> For the members of the commission and for those of other inquiries analysed in later chapters, see appendix 3.

<sup>170</sup> There were differences between them about the form such education should take; for example, Lucy Cavendish had a particular concern that people should not be educated beyond their station in life. She was also firmly convinced of the need for denominational religious education in schools, as is evident in her questions during the commission's proceedings.

<sup>171</sup> See for example, RC on London University, 1888-89; and Elementary Education 1886-88.



refused to sign the 39 Articles as a precondition of his election to a scholarship at Trinity College, Oxford.<sup>172</sup> Of the other members, seven were not members of the Church of England, which was itself represented by the Dean of Manchester [Edward Maclure] rather than a Bishop, in contrast to the Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts [1886-88] whose members had included the Bishop of London and Archbishop Manning.

Apart from the distinction of sex, the women members were unremarkable; they fitted neatly into the system, by class and through their educational expertise. Sophie Bryant was well known as a teacher, writer and administrator; she was already a member of the Convocation and Senate of London University, and [with H. Llewellyn Smith] was a member of the recently created Technical Education Board. Mrs Sidgwick was one of the pioneers of higher education for women, as a co-founder of Newnham College, of which she was Principal. Unlike Sophie Bryant, she had no professional training, but had considerable experience of research and administration. Lady Frederick Cavendish differed from them and from the male commissioners in that she had no professional experience of education, religion or politics; she was typical of many elite women in undertaking charitable and philanthropic work,<sup>173</sup> through which she developed her interest in education. Her social and political connections as a member of the Lyttelton family were a traditional qualification for service on such an inquiry, and in that, she was comparable to several of her male colleagues.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> See Fisher [1927: 34-43]. Despite his membership of the Anti-Suffrage movement [of which he and his wife Marion, the sister of Margaret Ashton (see reference to her views on women's representation on committees in chapter 4, below), were founder members], he was an enthusiastic supporter of other aspects of women's emancipation, particularly their right to higher education. In writing to Emily Davies about women's potential he observed that '...we may as well look a good long way, and eventually we may expect that as women are not drawn off for the Army and Navy etc., there will be more of them for study. Perhaps as you hinted the other day, they will be the learned class..' [22 Feb 1868, Bryce Mss.160: f.5-7] For his anti-suffrage connections, see correspondence with Louise Creighton during 1889-90, Bryce Mss.53, f.129-35. That would also have brought him into contact with Lucy Cavendish, who held anti-suffrage meetings at her London house. For a more general assessment of his work see Robbins [1972].

<sup>173</sup> Such work had benefits for the women involved that went beyond a sense of altruism; they gained particular knowledge of the administration of the organisations to which they gave their time and money, and more general awareness of political and economic matters as they affected the organisations.

<sup>174</sup> Not least her brother, the Hon. Rev. Edward Lyttelton, the Master of Haileybury.

The strongly representative nature of the commission was noted<sup>175</sup> and mostly approved by the press;<sup>176</sup> and there were many favourable comments about the appointment of women which made reference to their expertise. The highest praise came from the *Manchester Guardian*:

..the most satisfactory thing of all is that the absurd practice of not drawing on the services of women who are competent experts has been abandoned for the first time...<sup>177</sup>

The *Daily Telegraph* took the patronising view that 'the presence of lady members will exercise a mollifying influence ...', but did acknowledge that Sophie Bryant was 'a distinguished teacher in one of the foremost secondary schools for girls...'.<sup>178</sup> The importance of women in education was further seen in the appointment of five as assistant commissioners; two of whom, Miss Catherine Kennedy and Mrs Glynne Jones were colleagues of Sophie Bryant.

The female members of the commission owed their position to a combination of their individual achievements and the widespread general recognition of women's achievements within the education profession. Their work is examined in more detail in chapter 5 to assess how they interpreted their role, and whether they saw their primary duty as promoting the position of women or as neutral committee members.

## Conclusion

The changes, documented above, in the ways that women represented themselves through advisory committees have shown the growing influence

<sup>175</sup> The *Daily News* recorded that the interests of county councils, school boards, elementary teachers, universities, public schools, secondary schools and non-conformists were all represented. [2 March 1894, p.5.]

<sup>176</sup> An alternative view was expressed by Oscar Browning [possibly aggrieved at his failure to gain a place on the commission] in his letter congratulating Bryce on his chairmanship: 'I hear a great many complaints about the constitution of the Commission. The prevailing idea is that Acland has packed it so as to get a scheme passed which he has ready made'. He criticised the appointments of Sadler, Lyttelton and Jebb, and although he did not mention the women members, he may have mistakenly assumed that Henry Sidgwick was a member, or have elided him with his wife, as he included him with the other three in his critique '...Sidgwick our great thinker does not believe in Education ...'. [5 March 1894: Bryce Mss, f.11-12]

<sup>177</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 2 March 1894, p.7.

<sup>178</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 2 March 1894, p.5 and p.3. Other less public comments were equally condescending: Charles Hobhouse's diary entry for 20 Oct 1894 recorded that 'Henry Hobhouse told me that Jas. Bryce opened the proceedings of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education of which three ladies were members and present, by saying "Well, Gentlemen and Ladies, we may congratulate ourselves that we have no ornamental members among our number."' [David, 1977: 31]

of middle class women, and the reduction of direct evidence from poor or working class women. The more general consolidation of expertise in public life was reflected in the work of committees, and, in the case of women, by the development of a recognised group of women experts. There were also changes in the nature of the inquiries that were appointed, and in perceptions of their usefulness. More specialised reports were produced by individual officials, or small committees, into particular trades or industries after the creation of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, the women's factory inspectorate and the general increase in Government inspection. There was a rise in the use of Departmental Committees which tended to interview only selected experts or nominated representatives of groups, rather than inviting submissions from a wider range of people. There was thus a more general move away from the large-scale investigations undertaken by the Government in the earlier part of the century. Inquiries might still contain a dozen or more members but the evidence they heard was often given at one or more removes from those it concerned.

That change provided opportunities for many of the women who were active in philanthropy and in those professions that were open to them. Committee work could produce openings in Government service, and/or inclusion on other inquiries. For example, after their work on the Royal Commission on Labour, Clara Collet joined the Board of Trade as a Special Investigator; May Abraham became a factory inspector, and after she left the civil service in 1896 was much in demand as a committee member. Her marriage to H.J. Tennant in 1895 brought her into closer contact with leading members of the Liberal Party. She was clearly acceptable both socially and politically as a representative for women to those who appointed Government inquiries, as over the period 1890-1930 she served on more committees than any other woman.

The Royal Commission on Secondary Education was partially reconstituted in the Consultative Committee on Education, a semi-permanent body set up in 1900 to advise the Board of Education on policy matters.<sup>179</sup> Both Dr Bryant and Mrs Sidgwick were members, and the

<sup>179</sup> The committee was established by an Order in Council in 1900 [*PP*, 1900, lxiv, Cd.231]. It had 18 members, of whom three were women; other former members of the 1894 commission appointed to the Committee were Henry Hobhouse, Richard Jebb, Edward Lyttelton and Edward Maclure. See Daglish [1996]; Steedman [1969].

committee included a number of working teachers.<sup>180</sup> Many of its members also formed the other committees and inquiries instituted by the Board during the early twentieth century.<sup>181</sup> The women<sup>182</sup> on these committees formed a relatively closed circle in that they were rarely appointed to inquiries that were not concerned with education. However, women whose appointments were the result of their involvement with labour matters were more likely to be appointed to inquiries that were not strictly concerned with those issues. For example, May Tennant's appointment to the Royal Commission on Divorce in 1909 was described as resulting from her 'intimate knowledge of the needs of the poor'.<sup>183</sup> Within education, women were able to gain recognised specialist expertise more easily than in other professions, although there were restrictions here, as elsewhere, and women's participation was confined to committees dealing with curriculum or welfare in elementary or secondary schools, rather than finance, administration, or university education.<sup>184</sup>

Professional female experts were mainly drawn from the education profession and the women's trade union movement, and women from these two categories could be typified by, respectively, Sophie Bryant, or May Abraham. A third category might be defined as women who made a profession out of committees, for example, Lucy Cavendish. She had many shared interests with her female colleagues on the Royal Commission, and considerable knowledge of education, but both her behaviour on the commission and her appointment to it were differently marked by her social class and her political connections.<sup>185</sup> She was never appointed to another such inquiry,<sup>186</sup> but other women from a similar background were often

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<sup>180</sup> It also invariably included a representative from the Association of Head Mistresses.

<sup>181</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>182</sup> The men have not been investigated, but it is likely that similar connections existed between all the members.

<sup>183</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 Oct 1909, p.6. Other papers described Mrs Tennant and Lady Frances Balfour as representing women, see *Daily Express*, 29 Oct. 1909, p.1; the *Daily Mail* described women as one of the 'classes interested' in the composition of the commission's personnel, along with 'Judges and Bar, County Courts, the Church, the ecclesiastical courts, Nonconformists...' [29 Oct. 1909, p.7.]

<sup>184</sup> Compare here the listing of women's committees in appendix 2 with the listing of all education committees in Ford & Ford [1957 and 1951].

<sup>185</sup> Women's work on commissions and committees is analysed in chapter 5.

<sup>186</sup> Although she never again served on a Government-appointed inquiry, she continued to be appointed to many other committees.

included, for example Lady Frances Balfour, or Lady Crewe, who had been brought up to see committee service as their work, whether it was on a Government inquiry or a charitable body.<sup>187</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century a class of acceptable women advisers had been clearly established and, through their preoccupations and professional or philanthropic commitments, there was also a class of issues that it was acceptable for them to advise on. Their inclusion within the committee system resulted both from their own efforts and from the relative flexibility of a system that did not formally exclude them. The women appointed were already involved in some aspects of the political world in which the committees worked, and the ease with which they were absorbed demonstrates the ability of that world to expand while changing very few of its fundamental principles.

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<sup>187</sup> That point was confirmed for Lady Emmott, by her grand-daughter, Mrs Joan Simon. [Conversation with Joan and Brian Simon, 20 March 1996.] See also Elizabeth Haldane Mss.; her letters to her mother refer to 'going to work' by which she meant the many committees of which she was a member.

## Chapter 4

**Social Solutions to Political Problems: Women-only Committees****1900-1923****Part 1**

By the end of the nineteenth century there was an acceptance by many Ministers and senior civil servants that in certain circumstances women should be included on Government inquiries, despite an ambivalence about whether they should be there as representatives of all women, or because of their individual knowledge of the subject under investigation. The pattern of committee appointments continued largely unchanged from that established during the 1890s; the numbers of women involved continued to be small, and the subjects of inquiry limited to welfare and educational matters. However, during the early decades of the twentieth century a small number of inquiries was made up exclusively of women. They were the

1901 Committee of Inquiry into the Boer War Concentration Camps:  
Chairwoman Millicent Fawcett;

1914 Committee on Women's Employment: Chairwoman Lady  
Crewe;

1915 Women's Committee of the Central Control Board: Chairwoman  
Mrs Louise Creighton;

1919 Advisory Committee on Women JPs: Chairwoman Lady Crewe;<sup>1</sup>

1923 Committee on the Supply of Female Domestic Servants:  
Chairwoman Mrs. E.M. Wood.

In addition, the Ministry of Reconstruction<sup>2</sup> set up a number of women's committees under the auspices of its Women's Advisory Committee.<sup>3</sup>

The chapter examines some of these committees as well as the committee work of women in the Ministry of Reconstruction in order to try to establish whether there were any common patterns in their appointment, and whether that might have been related to any strategic definition of women's expertise. The inquiries themselves were usually clearly identifiable as concerning women; although not exclusively, for example in

<sup>1</sup> This inquiry has been included, even though its status is unclear. There is correspondence between the Lord Chancellor [Lord Birkenhead] and Lloyd George about its establishment, and references to it in Gertrude Tuckwell's papers, but the official files relating to it at PRO reference LCO.2/615 are missing. Its report was not published, and although it is probable that a copy exists in the private papers of one or more of the committee members I have not yet been able to trace it.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry was set up in 1917; see below, pp. 17-3-79.

<sup>3</sup> These are detailed in appendix 2, as well as in the general outline structure of the Ministry in appendix 4.

the Concentration Camps Committee or the inquiries into housing undertaken by women's committees in 1918.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, women were not automatically appointed as members of all inquiries which concerned matters in which they might have been supposed to have an interest, such as the 1902-03 Royal Commission on Physical Training, although they did appear before that commission as witnesses.

The chapter suggests that although the appointment of all-women committees might have represented some recognition of women's advances in public life, the fact that such committees had only women members had the effect of limiting those advances, and of further delineating women's participation as separate and marginal.<sup>5</sup> The chapter begins with a brief overview of the general patterns of women's committee involvement to indicate the anomalous position of the all-women committees. It then considers the Ladies Committee on Concentration Camps in some detail and compares some of the general points raised by that discussion in relation to the appointment and work of the Central Committee on Women's Employment; the two Women's Housing Committees of the Ministry of Reconstruction; and the 1923 Ministry of Labour Committee on Domestic Servants.

### 1. Patterns of Women's membership of Government Committees

Some discussion of numerical representation must preface and qualify any other analysis of the nature and quality of women's influence on policy through committees, to emphasise that even within the circumscribed areas where women were involved their relative numbers remained small. The nature and relative numbers of women's appointments to Government inquiries seemed to have been established from the beginning of their participation in the 1890s and had a consistency that persisted beyond the period examined here.<sup>6</sup> As table 1.2 shows, the ratio of men to women as

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<sup>4</sup> There were two of these, one for England and Wales chaired by Lady Emmott, and one for Scotland chaired by Mrs Helen Kerr; see p. 359, below.

<sup>5</sup> That might have been deliberate as although civil servants and Ministers could argue that they were responding to women's requests for participation, their response was designed to cause the least disruption to existing committee practices.

<sup>6</sup> It has not been possible to check all committees, but women were not automatically included as members of Royal Commissions until after World War Two and they rarely comprised more than a third of the membership, either at that time or at present. The pattern seems to be traceable beyond *ad hoc* committees: the May 1997 general election produced a House of Commons with 128 women members, or 19% of the total. See also the figures for women's membership of public bodies in chapter 1, footnote 115.

members of committees stayed at about 4:1.

The first inclusion of women on Government committees in 1893-94 did not preface a rush of such appointments: between 1893 and 1899 18 women were appointed to only 12 inquiries, mainly Departmental Committees.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, any expectation by women that they would achieve greater participation under the Liberal Government after 1905 was not borne out by the scale of their committee appointments; during the first two years of the Liberal administration only one inquiry<sup>8</sup> included a woman. She was May Tennant [Abraham], who by 1906 could be regarded as a safe as well as an experienced choice through her membership of two previous temporary committees and her civil service employment in the Home Office factory inspectorate. She had the additional advantage of a husband who was closely connected to the Government, as Asquith's Secretary while at the Home Office and as his brother in law.<sup>9</sup> However, like many of the other women I have surveyed who were equally well connected, such relationships should be seen within the context of her other work. She had no formal education, but had acquired enough knowledge of employment and factory legislation to mount prosecutions as a factory inspector and to produce a number of digests and surveys of domestic and international labour laws. She put that knowledge to good effect in her committee work; she was a skilled questioner and had an awareness of social conditions that was often not shared by many of her colleagues.

The absolute numbers of women on committees increased for the decade 1900-09 to 17 inquiries with 40 women and 166 men, but the proportion of women remained similar at 18%. During the years leading up to the outbreak of World War One there was both an absolute and a relative increase,<sup>10</sup> with 18 committees from 1910 until the end of 1913 that included women, although there was little variation in the numbers of

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<sup>7</sup> For details see appendix 2.

<sup>8</sup> The DC on Truck Acts, 1906.

<sup>9</sup> Asquith had married Margot Tennant, Harold's sister in 1894. She was a leading member of the 'Souls', an elite, fashionable group whose members stressed their interest in art and literature against what they saw as the worthy but dull political interests of their contemporaries. Despite her opposition to women's suffrage and her general lack of interest in women's political participation, Margot Tennant was an important contact for many politically active women, including Frances Balfour, Elizabeth Haldane, and Edith Lyttelton, with all of whom she kept up a sporadic, but, at times, intensive correspondence. See also Asquith [1920 and 1922].

<sup>10</sup> That is, relative to the previous decade.



women relative to men appointed to them at 34 to 175 - or 19% of women. The rise in women's numbers is heavily weighted towards education; the Consultative Committee on Education was a semi-permanent body of which women were consistently a quarter of the members.<sup>11</sup> If each of the reports of that body are included, 11 of the 35 committees with women members during the period 1900-13 were concerned with educational matters. It is also clear from an examination of all *ad hoc* education committees that they had the highest level of women's representation: the Ford *Breviates* list 42 committees dealing with education during the years 1900-16, 12 of which included women [28%]; while under their category of labour, there were 91 inquiries, only 14 of which included women [15%]. Taking their classifications of social security and health together, the numbers were 59 committees of which 12 included women [20%].<sup>12</sup>

The rise in the numbers of women appointed and in the proportion of their representation to individual committees during the 1910-19 period is mainly attributable to the large numbers of women involved with the committees set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction, most of which were appointed after the 1918 Representation of the People Act had granted the parliamentary franchise to women over the age of 30. If the figures for 1918-19 are extrapolated, the scale of the increase can be shown. [See Table 4.1, below.] It should also be noted that as the rise in women appointed was accompanied by a corresponding rise in the number of men, it is likely that the overall rise was at least partly connected to a temporary increase in the numbers of committees appointed towards the end of the war. However, the rate of increase in absolute numbers of women appointed and their average numbers on committees is clearly the result of women's activity in the Ministry of Reconstruction where 71 women served on its various committees; more than half of these were involved in its Women's Advisory Committee sub-committees on domestic service.

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<sup>11</sup> See chapter 3, note 180 for details of the composition of the Consultative Committee.

<sup>12</sup> Figures taken from Ford and Ford, [1951, 1953 and 1957].

**Table 4.1:**  
**Comparison of male and female membership of committees**  
**with women members, 1910-17 and 1918-19**

	Total c'tees with women members	Total numbers of men	Total numbers of women	Average number of women per c'tee	Ratio of male to female members
1910-17	62	594	159	2.6	3.7:1
1918-19	27	321	148	5.5	2.2:1

During the late nineteenth century women had gained expertise as social investigators both as individuals, for example Beatrice Webb, Clara Collet,<sup>13</sup> or the early members of the women's factory inspectorate,<sup>14</sup> and collectively through the inquiries set up by the Women's Industrial Council and the Women's Co-Operative Guild. The growth of women's associations helped in the collection of information about women by women, and contributed to the reinforcement of a separate world of women's interests within the state. However, although those associations constantly urged the appointment of women to committees and commissions, as well as to a wide range of other public offices, they generally accepted that on such bodies they would work with men, and there is no record that women ever requested an all-women committee.<sup>15</sup> Within that context the appointment of all-women inquiries is anomalous, and the first is examined below.

## 2. The Ladies' Committee of Inquiry into the Boer War Concentration Camps

The committee was appointed by the War Office in July 1901 to investigate conditions in the Concentration Camps in the Boer Republics, set up by the British Army to house Boers, mainly women and children, driven off their land by the scorched earth policy instituted by Lord Roberts in 1900 and

<sup>13</sup> Both had worked on Charles Booth's survey. See references on p.128.

<sup>14</sup> See McFeely [1988], Martindale [1938] and [1944], Squire [1927], Tuckwell [1931], Markham [1949].

<sup>15</sup> During the 1920s a number of women's organisations, and particularly the Women's Freedom League, argued that men and women should be equally represented on all Government committees.

continued by Lord Kitchener.<sup>16</sup> The members were Mrs Millicent Fawcett, Miss Lucy Deane, Miss Katherine Brereton, Lady Alice Knox, Dr Jane Waterston and the Hon. Dr Ella Scarlett. The appointment of an inquiry owed much to reports compiled by Miss Emily Hobhouse<sup>17</sup> who had visited the camps during December 1900 and the early months of 1901.<sup>18</sup> She drew attention to the high death rates, especially among children, and the general lack of provision in the camps. Her early letters were circulated among MPs who opposed the war,<sup>19</sup> and in March they began to ask for information from St John Brodrick [Secretary of State for War] about the numbers of women and children in the camps,<sup>20</sup> accusing the Government of mismanagement. There were several calls for an inquiry, but Brodrick gave no indication that he was prepared to appoint one and regularly claimed that lack of information from South Africa prevented him giving accurate statistics about the state of affairs in the camps.<sup>21</sup> Lord Raglan announced in the House of Lords on 15 July that the War Office was to send a committee of ladies to investigate the camps,<sup>22</sup> and Brodrick informed the House of Commons of the names of the members on 22 July 1901, on the

<sup>16</sup> It was widely accepted by the British military high command that the Boer women on the farms gave shelter and material assistance to the Boer commandos, and that the destruction of their houses and supplies would force the commandos to surrender. For an account of the implementation and effects of this policy, see Spies [1980]. Pakenham [1979: 440-1] discusses its military effectiveness.

<sup>17</sup> Emily Hobhouse [1860-1926] was a worker for various causes that reflected the political interests of her Liberal family. She was a member of the WIC and worked on investigations into children's labour. She visited South Africa during December 1900 to May 1901, on behalf of the South African Conciliation committee, [see below] to distribute relief for the women and children in the camps and on her return mounted a campaign to publicise the poor conditions in the camps. She was not invited to join the committee of inquiry and was expelled from South Africa when she tried to go back there in late 1901. There are a number of accounts of her life, several of which include her extensive correspondence. See van Reenen [1984], Balme [1994].

<sup>18</sup> She was supported by the South Africa Conciliation Committee, formed in 1899 by anti-war Liberals to keep 'before the public the necessity of people of Dutch and English extraction living together in South Africa and living in friendly relations, if there is to be any peace'. [Leonard Courtney, President of the SACC, quoted by Emily Hobhouse in Van Reenen [1984: 14]. See also Davey [1978: 77-83.] At the beginning of 1900 a women's branch was formed and Miss Hobhouse became honorary secretary.

<sup>19</sup> Some of the most persistent questioning came from Irish Members, who equated the treatment of the Boers with that of the Irish tenant farmers forced off their land during the Land War of the previous century. For a discussion of Irish attitudes to the Boer War see Davey [1978, chapter viii]; for the Land War, see O'Callaghan [1994].

<sup>20</sup> One of the first MPs to raise the matter was C.P. Scott on 28 March 1901; see *Hansard*, [92], 28 March 1901, 46.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, his reply to John Dillon, MP, *Hansard*, [96], 27 June 1901, 148-50.]

<sup>22</sup> *Hansard*, [97], 15 July 1901, 373-74.

same day that four of them had sailed for South Africa. The women spent four months in South Africa visiting all the camps, and published their report in February 1902.<sup>23</sup>

The appointment of this first all-woman Government committee has been accepted by a number of historians as a recognition of women's increased abilities and status. Ray Strachey [1931: 193] noted that such a committee was unprecedented and that this had been a strong inducement in persuading Mrs Fawcett to become a member, though she was '...naturally... proud to be asked to serve her country in such an important capacity...'. More recently, Barbara Caine [1992: 213] has written that the Ladies' Committee '...suggest[ed] a new sense of [women's] public and political role...'. Paula Krebs [1992] has examined the controversy over the camps as part of a discussion of gender relations within imperialism, observing that the appointment of Millicent Fawcett

...was an acknowledgement of the seriousness with which [the Government] took Hobhouse's assessment of the camp problem as a women's issue. It was not a male public health expert Brodrick dispatched to South Africa - it was a woman qualified because she was a famous *woman*. [1992:53]

However, such readings are at odds with the nature of other appointments of women at this time,<sup>24</sup> and that raises the question of why the War Office decided to depart from the more usual procedures, as many previous attempts by women to have just one woman member on a committee had been resisted.<sup>25</sup> Some philanthropic groups had requested

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<sup>23</sup> *PP*, 1902, lxvii, Cd.893. Their findings were similar to those of Emily Hobhouse, although some improvements had been made after her visit; they made a number of recommendations which were implemented, and ordered the closure of one camp and the removal of inefficient personnel from others.

<sup>24</sup> Most of the accounts are also centred on Millicent Fawcett and her feminism, and that involves other questions about the valorisation of individuals, whether male or female, for political purposes. In this case the role of Mrs Fawcett is usually discussed to the exclusion of that of her colleagues; for instance, the committee's work and report are described as though she alone was responsible for them. For an account which includes the views of other members of the committee, see Balme [1994].

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, the extensive campaign by the WLF and NUWW and other women's groups for the appointment of a woman to the RC on the Aged Poor in 1892-93 and the 1899 DC to advise on regulation under the Inebriates Act, 1898. Women activists were especially aggrieved at the absence of a woman on the latter committee, as Flora Stevenson had been appointed to a similar Scottish DC in the same year.

permission for women to visit the camps to distribute aid;<sup>26</sup> and John Ellis, MP, asked that

duly accredited persons from this country, ladies of the type of Miss Florence Nightingale, shall have free access to these camps,<sup>27</sup>

but this was not for the purpose of investigation. There were no calls from MPs for women to be appointed because women and children were concerned, in the way that James Bryce and others had lobbied for women members of the Royal Commission on Labour in 1891. John Redmond, called for

a fair and impartial Commission .. composed of men who have the confidence of Liberals and Tories and the Irish members..<sup>28</sup>

while the Liberal leader, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, said that it was the Government's duty to send out 'a full squad of ladies and competent medical men..<sup>29</sup> Again this suggested that any involvement by women was seen in terms of relief work, and even those organisations, such as the WLF or the NUWW, which had canvassed for women's inclusion on domestic inquiries,<sup>30</sup> put no pressure on the Government in this case. Furthermore, as my earlier analysis of committee participation shows, the appointment of this all-women committee did not mark the beginning of greater female participation. Women were not appointed in higher numbers after the Ladies Committee; their relative proportions on subsequent inquiries continued to be what they had been previously, and any linear tracing of their participation would show this committee as aberrant.

As the reasons do not appear to have come from a positive recognition of women's qualities as investigators, they must be sought elsewhere. If the circumstances surrounding the investigation into the concentration camps are analysed within the context of other Government

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<sup>26</sup> This had been the original reason for Emily Hobhouse's visit to South Africa, see above. The Victoria League [founded in April 1901] had set up two funds in South Africa: one for 'distressed' British refugees; and the other for the women and children in the Concentration Camps. A number of English women already resident in South Africa were involved in various forms of relief work. See Headlam [1933: 8-9] and Milner [1951: 137-38, 145-48]; for the formation of the Victoria League see Milner [1951: 237-38] and *Victoria League Annual Reports* [1], 1902-03.

<sup>27</sup> *Hansard* [95] 17 June 1901, 589.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* col.618.

<sup>29</sup> Reported in *Daily News*, 15 June 1901, p.2.

<sup>30</sup> See chapters 2 and 3 for some accounts of their activities.

inquiries into aspects of the Boer war, a different picture emerges of the way women could be fitted into, and exploited by, the administrative system.

The most obvious comparison is with the Royal Commission into South African Military Hospitals, appointed in 1900, and which, like the concentration camps inquiry, had been mainly instigated by the efforts of a philanthropic individual, the MP William Burdett-Coutts,<sup>31</sup> who had visited the army hospitals in South Africa, following revelations of the appalling conditions in them.<sup>32</sup> There were 22,000 deaths during the war: 13,500 of which were from disease, mainly enteric fever, and 31,000 men were invalided home from the same cause.<sup>33</sup> Burdett-Coutts inspected the hospital camps, with military permission, and wrote a series of articles for *The Times* describing what he found there. He was careful not to make personal condemnations of army medical staff, but other correspondents were less scrupulous: extracts from soldiers' letters home were published daily for weeks through the summer of 1900.<sup>34</sup> There were also many letters from women, both from South Africa, where they were working as paid or volunteer nurses or social workers,<sup>35</sup> and from within Britain. Such letters often compared the treatment of the sick and wounded soldiers with what were seen as the far better conditions for the Loyalist and Boer refugees. The extent of women's recorded concern lends some support to Krebs' assertion that the concentration camps came to be seen as a women's issue, but a wider examination reveals that such concern was not confined only to the conditions in which Boer women and children were held. Long before the conditions in the concentration camps became public

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<sup>31</sup> Husband of Angela; both were leading philanthropists.

<sup>32</sup> A distinction should be made between civilian volunteer hospitals where conditions were generally good and the hospitals run by the Army Medical Corps. Pakenham, [1979: 381-85] describes hospital conditions.

<sup>33</sup> Figures given in Nasson, [1980: 136].

<sup>34</sup> Critical letters were published in a wide range of newspapers, regardless of whether the paper supported the war. See, for example, *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily News*, almost daily through June and July 1900.

<sup>35</sup> The situation had been common knowledge in South Africa since early in the war: Mrs Hanbury-Williams [wife of Milner's Military Secretary] described the poor standards of the Army doctors and nurses in a letter to Violet Markham, 17 Dec 1899 [Markham Mss., 25/39]. See also the anonymous account from 'a lady at Thaba N'chu', *The Times*, 4 July 1901, 9(d). The state of the hospitals became a particular concern of the Prince and Princess of Wales and led to the formation of the Queen Alexandra Imperial Nursing Service in 1902. See Arthur [1934: 203ff.]; Lee [1925: I, 619 and 793].

knowledge, women had taken up causes in the war;<sup>36</sup> and they were at least as vocal in 1900 in their protests about the army hospitals as they were over the plight of Boer women and children in 1901.<sup>37</sup>

The hospitals inquiry was announced on 4 July 1900; the chairman was Lord Justice Romer, with two medical practitioners, W.S. Church and D.J. Cunningham, representing the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons respectively. It was not initially named as other than an 'inquiry', and *The Times* registered the concern of some [unnamed] MPs that it would be merely a committee of the War Office whose nominees would hide the truth about the hospitals.<sup>38</sup> In the House of Commons, John Dillon asked for two separate inquiries: one to investigate the conditions in South Africa; the other to examine the role of the War Office administration in London and its effects on the welfare of the troops abroad. A.J. Balfour<sup>39</sup> refused any discussion of the terms of reference on the grounds that this was unprecedented, and was equally clear that there should be no separate inquiry into the War Office.<sup>40</sup> An example of War Office and Prime Ministerial unwillingness to formalise the inquiry is shown in the confusion surrounding its naming as first a Committee of Inquiry, then a Departmental Committee and then a Royal Commission. Lord Lansdowne's<sup>41</sup> denial to the House of

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<sup>36</sup> There were a great many women in South Africa engaged in various forms of philanthropic war work: see accounts by Violet Brooke-Hunt [1901] who set up Soldiers' Institutes; the Duchess of Atholl [1958]; and the Countess of Airlie [Ellis [ed.], 1962]. They were not always welcome: Milner wrote to Miss Bertha Synge about the 'fearful bother here with lady visitors'; and there was correspondence between Joseph Chamberlain and Milner about the Queen's anxieties [Headlam: 1933, 25/4/1900, p.74]. Women's presence was defended by Arthur Stanley [brother of the Earl of Derby and subsequently a leading member of the Red Cross] who wrote in support of women workers in South Africa. [*Times*, 12 July 1901.]

<sup>37</sup> I have not undertaken a systematic comparison of the amount of correspondence to newspapers on these two subjects, and as editors may well have been biased in their selection of letters for publication, such a comparison would have no great validity; but during the six weeks leading up to the appointment of the hospitals commission there was clearly more published correspondence on the subject in *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and *Daily News* than on the concentration camps in a comparable period before the announcement of the Ladies' Committee. The *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News* were both opposed to the war, and would thus have been more likely to promote the camps controversy.

<sup>38</sup> Editorial, 4 July 1900, p.11. See also 'Political Notes', p.12.

<sup>39</sup> At that time First Lord of the Treasury.

<sup>40</sup> He described the two commissions proposed by Dillon as 'very objectionable' as their duties would overlap. *Hansard*, [85], 5 July 1900, 620.

<sup>41</sup> Secretary of State for War until November 1900, when he was succeeded by St John Brodrick.

Lords on 5 July 1900<sup>42</sup> that a Departmental Committee had ever been considered is qualified by the Home Office correspondence on the subject. That shows that Balfour's Private Secretary visited the Home Office on 19 July 1900 to say that

it had been decided that the special commission should be appointed by the Prime Minister in the same manner that an ordinary Departmental Ctee is appointed ...<sup>43</sup>

The inquiry was not announced to be a Royal Commission until 24 July, the date of its first meeting, and was widely expected to be ineffectual from the start. Both the *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* criticised the Government for its refusal to grant the commission compulsory powers to call witnesses. The *News* described it as

.. a solemn sham .. Does it look as if Mr Balfour or the Cabinet were really desirous of getting at the truth, and not merely of allaying the impatience of the public, and staving off a disagreeable subject?<sup>44</sup>

There was also criticism of the commission's personnel: Lord Romer was seen as having too little knowledge of military affairs, while some of the medical members were seen as having too much. Dr Cunningham was objected to by Burdett-Coutts: first, on the grounds that he held a War Office appointment,<sup>45</sup> and secondly that he had been a guest of Dr Jameson (Head of the Army Medical Corps) during the week before the announcement of the commission.<sup>46</sup> It was also revealed that he was a close friend of Lord Roberts.<sup>47</sup> The parliamentary row over this dragged on for some weeks, and eventually two further members were added.<sup>48</sup>

The history of the hospitals commission has been given at some length in order to demonstrate the extreme sensitivity of the Government, and especially the War Office, to inquiries of this sort, and to indicate some points for comparison with the Concentration Camps inquiry. The backgrounds to the appointments of the two inquiries were similar, in the

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<sup>42</sup> *Hansard*, [85], 5 July 1900, 595-96.

<sup>43</sup> PRO.HO.10201/B32430.

<sup>44</sup> *Daily News*, editorial 20 July 1900, p.5.

<sup>45</sup> He was a staff examiner to the Medical Department

<sup>46</sup> *The Times*, 12 July 1900. See also *Hansard*, [85], 5 July 1900, 619.

<sup>47</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 12 July 1900.

<sup>48</sup> Sir David Richmond, former Lord Provost of Glasgow, and Mr F. Harrison, the General Manager of the London and North Western Railway.



interplay of delay and denial before they were finally announced. The people who had publicly agitated for improvements, William Burdett-Coutts and Emily Hobhouse, were attacked for their allegations; and there was considerable public hostility to the memberships and work of the two inquiries. Some contemporaries also noticed the comparison between the two inquiries: a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* compared Burdett-Coutts and Miss Hobhouse and noted sympathetically that

Both have incurred much social obloquy in certain quarters, and probably neither will receive any official reward.<sup>49</sup>

Emily Hobhouse was portrayed as a hysterical crank,<sup>50</sup> but her reports could not be denied; although they seem to have had less impact than the Burdett-Coutts articles, if judged by letters to the press.<sup>51</sup> However, they meshed with other accounts (the anecdotal evidence of soldiers and the reports of philanthropic societies working among the refugees), and were given considerable publicity by English anti-war campaigners.<sup>52</sup> This had already caused doubts among previously solid supporters of the war: Philip Lyttelton Gell wrote to Milner that:

..We were perfectly horrified at the talk at a luncheon of Mrs Neville Lyttelton<sup>53</sup> for whom we had gone somewhat out of our way to interest in Women's Emigration. She is pro-Boer - absolutely perverted by

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<sup>49</sup> Letter from J. Carvell-Williams, 25 July 1901, p.3.

<sup>50</sup> Sir David Gill [(1843-1914), and His Majesty's astronomer at the Cape of Good Hope, 1879-1907] wrote to Violet Markham that '... the Govt was weak to yield to the Hobhouse nonsense. ... She seems to be a hysterical ass - who holds that Boer women should be fed on chicken & champagne ...' [Markham Mss 25/31, 20 Sept 1901]. An editorial in the *Cape Times*, 7 Aug 1901, p.10 referred to the 'shrieking sisterhood of Emily Hobhouse and her friends...'. See also Headlam [1933: 227].

<sup>51</sup> As noted above, this is obviously not a reliable measure since the newspapers could control the letters they printed, and the issue of the camps was complicated by the fact that the inmates were enemies, while the soldiers were loyally fighting for the Empire.

<sup>52</sup> There was, however, some ambiguity in the responses of women's groups: members of the WLF and the WNLA debated the war, passing motions condemning the farm burning and the camps [see *Summary of Women's Federation News*, Dec. 1900]; the WNLA recorded a number of meetings and conferences, [see the *Quarterly Leaflet of the Women's National Liberal Association*, Jan 1900, June 1900]; and both reported on Emily Hobhouse's work. Neither mentioned the appointment of the Ladies' Committee in their published reports. It also went unrecorded in the reports of the NUWW, even though Mrs Fawcett and Miss Deane were both members. Emily Hobhouse was a member of the executive committee of the Women's Industrial Council and was also involved with the WCG; neither of these organisations made any reference to her activities nor to the Ladies' Committee.

<sup>53</sup> Katharine, wife of General Lyttelton; he served in S. Africa during 1901, and after visiting him there she wrote an account about a concentration camp. See N. Lyttelton [1927].

some Dutchman ... Mrs Alfred Lyttelton<sup>54</sup> is said to be weak-kneed also - so is Mrs Arnold-Forster. I quote these because they ought to know better. Grey goes off to Leonard Courtney - meets Merriman - & comes back shaken & wobbly - talking as if Merriman's opinion was a serious ground for reconsidering our position ..'.

He compared the '...lack of tenacity..' of '...clever people..' to the '...indomitable "put-it-through" line of the City..' <sup>55</sup>

Brodrick played down the degree of general and Government concern about the camps in his letters to Kitchener at the time when the decisions about the committee were being made, representing it merely as an inspection, rather than an investigation.<sup>56</sup> He first brought up the possibility of an inquiry in a letter of 4 May 1901 while Emily Hobhouse was still on her way back from South Africa,<sup>57</sup> although some of her letters had already been shown to Brodrick and Balfour, 'who both felt the subject needed enquiry'.<sup>58</sup> Brodrick's letter made no reference to her; he told Kitchener that:

We have a demand from responsible people headed by some MPs to allow (1) Extra comforts to be sent in (2) Some access by responsible & accredited people who can assist in measures for improving the life in the Camps ..... The object of these people is good .. They have also shown considerable discretion as they have had & communicated to Govt. some harrowing accounts of the condition of the earlier camps (Jan & Feb) & have not used them publicly.<sup>59</sup>

Kitchener's reply to this and subsequent letters from Brodrick resisted the idea of any form of inspection or inquiry by the War Office; he suggested that all questions about the camps should be handed over to the Colonial Secretary. This letter further noted that he had

allowed Mrs Rendal Harris who has been sent out by some relief

<sup>54</sup> Edith [known as D.D. in family correspondence]; she had written to the Government on behalf of the Victoria League proposing the formation of a committee to raise comforts for the camps; Mary Ward had made a similar, separate, proposal. [Brodrick note, 27 June 1901 in WO.32/8061.] Edith and Alfred Lyttelton were close friends of the Brodricks, and according to Millicent Fawcett's account it was Edith Lyttelton who first asked her if she would serve on the Concentration Camps Inquiry. [Fawcett, 1925:153]

<sup>55</sup> P. Lyttelton Gell to Milner, 14 March 1901, Milner Papers, MS214, f.107-12.

<sup>56</sup> Brodrick to Kitchener 25 June 1901, PRO.30/57/22, f.251.

<sup>57</sup> She travelled on the RMS Saxon, leaving South Africa on 7 May and landing on 24 May. Milner was also returning home on this ship and had several conversations with Miss Hobhouse; see Balme [1994: 180, 182-83].

<sup>58</sup> E. Hobhouse *Memoir*, quoted in van Reenen [1984:121]. See also letter from Kate Courtney to Leonard Courtney [2 May 1901] cited Balme, 1994:191-92.

<sup>59</sup> Brodrick to Kitchener, 4 May 1901, PRO.30/57/22.

committee to come up and go round all the Camps - One or two other ladies have asked for permission; but as I have received letters from home that they belong to the pro boer party and are merely going for political motives I have refused.<sup>60</sup>

The confusion over whether the inquiry should be primarily investigative or whether the women were simply to inspect the camps and assess the distribution of charitable donations seems to have largely emanated from Brodrick. Milner, like Kitchener, had no interest in further investigations by outsiders:

if we lay down the principle of allowing no more outsiders to meddle with the camps, and stick to it, we shall gain more than we lose'.<sup>61</sup>

He had given Emily Hobhouse the impression that any committee that was sent out would be a working group, and that she might be included,<sup>62</sup> but he clearly favoured the appointment of Government-sponsored officials to monitor camp conditions and supervise the distribution of aid.<sup>63</sup> The ambiguity over the designation of the committee was confirmed in the official correspondence, in which it was discussed as though it was concerned only with charitable relief.<sup>64</sup> The speed with which Brodrick seems to have decided about the composition of the inquiry and its investigatory terms of reference permitted no examination of either. Kitchener was told on 6 July that

We are keeping up our wickets agst. a storm of criticism. The question is being run on political lines & endless organisations want to send out people. We are refusing all but think of sending some half dozen ourselves. I will advise you in time by telegraph of the names...,

and on 13 July<sup>65</sup>

We have selected 4 ladies from here ... to co-operate with local

<sup>60</sup> Kitchener to Brodrick, 28 June 1901, PRO.30/57/22.

<sup>61</sup> Milner to R. Hanbury-Williams, 9 June 1901, Milner Mss. 185, f.134-38.

<sup>62</sup> E. Hobhouse to Mrs Charles Murray, 22-24 May 1901, quoted van Reenen [1984:115]. Milner to Hanbury-Williams: 'if .. it is thought necessary to allow such meddling, then Miss Hobhouse had better be one of the meddlers...', 9 June 1901, Milner Mss. 185, f.134-38.

<sup>63</sup> Milner to Hanbury-Williams, 9 June 1901, Milner Mss. 185, f.134-38.

<sup>64</sup> See printed and manuscript correspondence in WO.32/8061.

<sup>65</sup> They may have been selected, but had not actually agreed to serve by that date. Lady Alice Knox received a telegram asking her to be a member of the committee on 16 July 1901. [Information from Mrs A. Dundas-Bekker in letter to me of 18 November 1996.] Ella Scarlett did not confirm that she would serve until 9 August 1901. [WO.32/8061.]

Committees on Concentration Camps. You will not find them a trouble I hope.<sup>66</sup>

Milner was on leave in England and might have been consulted verbally, but he did not seem to have been formally involved in the choice of the members.<sup>67</sup>

The official terms of reference of the committee were that it should advise on the distribution of charitable funds; the general organisation of the camps; and the suitability of their geographical position.<sup>68</sup> It was only privately that Brodrick told Mrs Fawcett that although not formally a Royal Commission they would in practice have the powers of such a body.<sup>69</sup> That avoided the risk of lengthy discussions in the House of Commons like those which occurred over the appointment of the Hospitals Commission, as the committee could be described as having practical, philanthropic aims. The confidential instruction to the women to act as if they were a Royal Commission meant that the War Office could receive detailed information about conditions in the camps without alarming the camp administrators and the military command, especially Kitchener, in South Africa.<sup>70</sup> As in the case of the hospitals, the Government were receiving conflicting reports, but were less prepared to have them officially confirmed, hence the committee's double purpose. The women's lack of status because of their sex and the ambiguous form of their inquiry were both important. Although they may

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<sup>66</sup> Brodrick to Kitchener, PRO.30/57, f.270-1 and f.281.

<sup>67</sup> An undated letter from Edmund Garrett [a political and personal friend of Milner, and Millicent Fawcett's cousin] suggests that Milner knew little of the women who were to form the committee. Garrett did not mention Jane Waterston in this letter although both men knew her [she had been a friend of Garretts since his arrival in South Africa in 1895 and had actively supported his political ambitions there]. That might mean that the letter was written before her appointment was confirmed and indeed Garrett may have been instrumental in persuading her to overcome her initial refusal to serve. For details of their friendship, and for her reluctance to serve on the committee see Bean and van Heyningen [1983: 237-8; and 246-7, respectively]. See also the *Daily Mail* 24 July 1901, p.5, 'Ladies Commission condemned at the Cape', which reported her refusal to serve on the committee and that she had written to the *Cape Times* pointing out that 'whereas the Boer women have every necessary and considerable comfort, we were only able to offer the British refugee women and children bare sustenance'.

<sup>68</sup> *PP*, 1902, lxvii, Cd.893. There were in all 22 points of inquiry.

<sup>69</sup> Millicent Fawcett's Journal, Fawcett Papers, Box 90B in Fawcett Library.

<sup>70</sup> The tone of Brodrick's letters to Kitchener was placatory on this and many other matters.

have had some recognised personal and even professional authority,<sup>71</sup> the committee itself had none<sup>72</sup> and it would thus have been far easier for the Government to ignore both them and their findings if necessary.

Furthermore by limiting the membership to women, the War Office reduced the likelihood that there would be any investigation into matters of army procedure; the ladies might [and did] criticise conditions within the camps, but would be dealing only with the outward manifestations of the problem, and not the root cause.

There were some similarities between the personnel of the two inquiries: four of the women held professional appointments, two of them as doctors.<sup>73</sup> Lucy Deane and Katharine Brereton had considerable administrative experience in the civil service and the nursing profession, respectively; and Millicent Fawcett and Lady Knox were similarly qualified through their voluntary work. They were all supporters of the war, and all but Lucy Deane held strong imperialist views.<sup>74</sup> However, public discussion of the Ladies' Committee was made personal in a way that did not occur with the Hospitals Commission, and had the added dimension that the attacks on it were often attacks on what was seen as women's meddling in public life.<sup>75</sup> The *Daily Mail* supported the war, but not the Government's handling of it, and used the appointment of the committee to underline administrative incompetence:

The Government are apparently in earnest in their decision to add to

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<sup>71</sup> The professional status of Miss Deane and Drs Scarlett and Waterston was officially acknowledged in Treasury agreement to reimburse them for loss of earnings during their service on the Committee. This had some fiscal advantages to the Government: F. Mowatt [Financial Secretary at the Treasury] agreed that their salaries should be paid, noting that 'It will probably be cheaper than an inclusive fee of £4-4s a day throughout their absence'. [Treasury memo. 15 July 1901: PRO.T.1/9696/13196.]

<sup>72</sup> As it was officially constituted as neither a Royal Commission nor a Departmental Committee, there was no need for the Government to publicise its establishment, proceedings, or reports.

<sup>73</sup> Lucy Deane held a civil service appointment as a factory inspector, and Katherine Brereton was a senior nurse.

<sup>74</sup> Her lack of public support for imperialism may have stemmed in part from her dislike of army life, which she often referred to in letters to her sister, Hyacinthe; she had spent part of her early life in South Africa where her father had served in the army and had been killed in an earlier campaign. It might equally have been due to her civil service training; she recorded in the *Business Journals* that the women inspectors had been warned against making political statements. [Streatfeild Mss.]

<sup>75</sup> An exception was the *Daily News* which noted the achievements of the women, but added that the committee was like '... the famous whitewashing Commission which was set up to remove the effects of Mr Burdett-Coutts' speeches'. [23 July 1901, p. 5]

the load of care which rests upon Lord Kitchener's shoulders. Our generals in South Africa are now to be placed under the supervision of a committee of ladies...<sup>76</sup>

The paper ran a series of letters, many from women, whose general conclusion was that the 'ladies' should have confined themselves to philanthropy at home; or that if they must work in South Africa, they should also concern themselves with the camps which housed loyalist refugees. The fact that they were a committee of women became part of the attack on Government policy. One letter referred to 'shrieking women',<sup>77</sup> while a report on the return of Lady Gifford, who had been nursing in South Africa, was quoted as saying:

I am not vindictive, but I should like to drown the good ladies who came out to look at the concentration camps, which are very nearly perfect. Some of them were charming, but they were nearly all insane. One turned up at Standerton in a short skirt, puttie gaiters and Homburg hat. She addressed the officer in charge in a very peremptory tone and when he politely said he did not know who she was, she said indignantly, 'Why I'm the transport officer of the Concentration Camps Committee'.<sup>78</sup>

Lady Gifford's and other comments revealed considerable prejudice against the women because they had stepped beyond the bounds of conventional female activity. This was highlighted by the appointment of an all-woman committee in which women could not be figured in the complementary and subordinate roles that they might have been assumed to take when appointed to committees with men. In early July 1901, a debate in the House of Lords on the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill revealed the depth of prejudice against women being involved in political life, although the Duke of Northumberland also expressed the view that they could be 'useful in municipal life' through appointments to sub-committees.<sup>79</sup> In the middle of the camps controversy the *Daily Mail* pointedly ran an article on women's constitutional place, the author of which was even more opposed to their public role:

..there is constitutional place for but one woman at a time. All other women are impertinent meddlers when .. they mount public platforms,

<sup>76</sup> *Daily Mail*, editorial, 23 July 1901, p.4. This did not name the women but described them as '...unexceptionable'.

<sup>77</sup> *Daily Mail*, 28 July 1901.

<sup>78</sup> *Daily Mail*, 31 Jan. 1902, p.3.

<sup>79</sup> *Hansard*, [96], 2 July 1901, 567.

or still worse, find a surreptitious way into the private bureaux of men in office and there exercise their partial, prejudiced and ignorant influence.<sup>80</sup>

However, the women's report was better received than that of the Hospitals Commission.<sup>81</sup> Despite the public expression of anti-Boer views by Millicent Fawcett and Jane Waterston,<sup>82</sup> its conclusions and recommendations were similar to those published by Emily Hobhouse, and although that outcome had been predicted by pro and anti war factions, it enabled the Government to implement some reforms without being seen to favour the pro-Boers. None the less, the tone of the report was criticised on the grounds that it lacked sympathy, in its suggestions that a major cause of the high death rates among children was the Boer women's ignorance of hygiene and sanitation. The report was also condemned for its 'hard political rigour' and its failure to link the death rates to the military policy of devastation. Mrs Fawcett bore the brunt of the attacks, especially after she addressed a meeting of the Women's Liberal Unionist Association, when she was accused of flippancy in her description of the conditions in the Camps.<sup>83</sup>

In fact, the report did not represent fully the views of at least one of its writers. In private, Lucy Deane had admitted that she found some of the

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<sup>80</sup> Max Schmidt 'England through German Eyes', *Daily Mail*, 24 July 1901, p.4. Given the *Mail's* jingoism and German support for the Boers, the timing of the publication of the articles is surprising, although in the case of women in public the paper may have been using the author's views to implicate women generally as interfering, while their correspondence columns and editorial pages condemned the particular women on the Ladies Committee.

<sup>81</sup> See the *Daily News*, 24 February 1902, p.4 and the *Daily Mail*, 22 February 1902.

<sup>82</sup> See Mrs Fawcett's article for the *Westminster Gazette*, 4 July 1901 and Jane Waterston's letter to the *Cape Times*, 22 July 1901. In fact Mrs Fawcett's support for the war was as consistent with her constitutional beliefs as were her disparaging comments on Boer women with her class position. Davey [1978: ch. VIII] makes the point that other forms of political protest were incorporated into the anti-war movement, particularly citing the links with Irish dissent. Mrs Fawcett's position was the inverse; her over-riding political concern was the suffrage issue and in her autobiography [1925: 149] she argued '...the actual origin and cause of the war were on lines that very strongly emphasized the reasonable and irrefutable nature of the claim of British women to a share in the government of their country.' She likened the position of the Uitlanders under Kruger, who were taxed by the Transvaal Government but had no say in its election, to that of unenfranchised British women. In this she shared the views of many other women; members of the WLF had also made that analogy since early in the war. See *WLF Annual Report*, June 1900, p.72. For Mrs Fawcett's patriotism in relation to her feminism, see Rubinstein [1991: 115-121].

<sup>83</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, editorial, 22 February 1902, p.7 and 22 March 1902, p.5; *Daily News*, letter on behalf of South African Women and Children's Distress Committee, 26 March 1902, p.3.

wording unsatisfactory, and that she would have gone further in condemning the military strategy which had created the camps. Her account of the production of the report provides an explanation for what was seen as contradictory in Mrs Fawcett's position both by their contemporaries and in later accounts.<sup>84</sup> Lucy Deane had approached her work of investigation in South Africa in the same way as her work as a factory and sanitary inspector in England and Ireland,<sup>85</sup> and deplored the less scientific and professional methods of some of her colleagues.<sup>86</sup> She recognised that she would have to compromise in order to ensure that the important recommendations to improve conditions would be written into the report. Her letters claim that it was only at her insistence that many of these were included:

..I have struggled and fought and pleaded and argued for my main points and got nearly all of them. I couldn't prevent all the jam and blarney<sup>87</sup> at the beginning especially .. but I have got put in [a] all the "recommendations" we made and these by their own showing give a picture of the Camps. [b] The points in which I thought the Government had failed. The only thing I have failed over is the Rations, which are in my opinion one of the causes of the death-rate..<sup>88</sup>

The mixed reception given to the report was thus partly determined by the internal disagreements of the committee in producing the hybrid that Lucy Deane found so unsatisfactory, but its characterisation as unsympathetic implied that the women were not exhibiting those qualities of compassion that were claimed as their special contribution to public affairs. The *Daily News* linked this to the potential for reconciliation in a melodramatic editorial:

..these good ladies gave nothing to the poor victims of this war herded in those enclosures. They gave them no sympathy; and almost everything that they have said has tended to strengthen the evil race-hatred between English and Boer women. And yet there is the root of the evil. Without such sympathy, there can be no cure for

<sup>84</sup> See *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Feb 1902, editorial p.7; and Caine, p.214.

<sup>85</sup> Rubinstein [1991: 127] notes that Mrs Fawcett also made comparisons between the Boers and the Irish.

<sup>86</sup> Her sister, Hyacinthe, was also a Government inspector [in the Education Department] and the two compared their problems. Lucy wrote 'I think of your unruly team of conflicting schools when I am worried by my fellow Commissioners here and groan in spirit over amateurs.' [Streatfeild Mss., Letters, 1 Nov 1901]

<sup>87</sup> These were the sections of the report in which the Government and military were complimented for their humanitarian actions in settling up the camps.

<sup>88</sup> Letter to Hyacinthe Deane, 23 Dec 1901 [Streatfeild Mss.]



the woes of South Africa.<sup>89</sup>

That was hardly the view of the Government, but such reactions provided a useful distraction.

The committee had served one of the traditional purposes of such investigations,<sup>90</sup> by deflecting attention away from Government failure or inefficiency, and had given an added edge by incorporating women whose presence could be counted on to produce its own distracting controversy. In this case it seems likely that if, as Krebs has argued, the Government saw the camps controversy as a women's issue, the appointment of an all-woman committee was a cynical response which could hardly go wrong. Emily Hobhouse had already produced a report, which was largely confirmed by the committee, hence her recommendations could be implemented with official sanction. The use of women, although it may have encouraged some women<sup>91</sup> in the belief that the Government had recognised their abilities and judgement, was also a signal to the military high command in South Africa that the issue was of little importance. The Government had not been influenced by the extensive lobbying of women far more powerful than Emily Hobhouse into appointing even one woman to a range of committees on which a female representative would have been accepted without comment. It seems most unlikely that in this case they were acting primarily as a result of women's agency, although in the professional and political status of the Ladies' Committee they were clearly exploiting it in practical terms.

The public response to the revelations that gave rise to the inquiries into the hospitals and the camps, and the reaction to the inquiries themselves were not simply determined by individual support or opposition for the war, although that was clearly important. In both cases the inquiry provided Opposition MPs and the pro and anti-war press with opportunities to attack the Government's handling of the war, while the Government were

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<sup>89</sup> *Daily News*, 22 March 1902.

<sup>90</sup> As discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>91</sup> It was not commented on, however, by any of those journals which regularly featured women's achievements; for example, *The Queen*, which had carried several articles about the progress of the war, as well as features advising on an appropriate wardrobe for lady visitors to South Africa. The February 1902 issue of the *SWFN* referred to the facts about the camps disclosed in a Government report, but did not say that it had been produced by a committee of women.

able to use the inquiry as a buffer, as visible proof that some action was being taken. That mediatory function of such committees has been a standard of academic and other analysis, but the major difference in this case and at this time was the implication of women in the critique. Although women could actively work to influence policy through committees, they were ultimately subject to Government strategies that could negatively exploit such gains as they had achieved.

### 3. Separate Advisory Councils for Women

After the Concentration Camps Inquiry there were no appointments of women to any advisory committee until 1904 when Edith Deverell and Ellen Pinsent were appointed to a Departmental Committee and a Royal Commission respectively;<sup>92</sup> and there were no further all-women Government committees until the outbreak of World War One. Millicent Fawcett was congratulated by her friends on her appointment to the camps inquiry and on producing a report that advocated improvements to the system without alienating or antagonising those responsible for it,<sup>93</sup> but there was no obvious public acknowledgement by women's groups that the Ladies' Committee represented any kind of breakthrough for women.<sup>94</sup> None of these groups asked for the appointment of all-women committees, nor apparently did either the Conservative or Liberal Governments consider appointing them.

The early twentieth century was a period of intense activity for women and there were as many positions on how they should organise politically as there were groups discussing such organisation. The broad consensus was that they should secure representation on as many boards, councils or committees as possible, but such representation was always to be within the parameters of women's issues and always overdetermined and sometimes contradicted by the fight for the franchise. Members of the militant suffrage movement had little enthusiasm for, and were often directly hostile to, the

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<sup>92</sup> The Inter-Departmental Committee on Model Courses of Physical Exercises [1904] and the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded [1904-08].

<sup>93</sup> See letters to her from Frances Balfour and Kathleen Lyttelton, 15 July 1901 and 28 February 1902. [Fawcett Mss. 2c/73]

<sup>94</sup> Rubinstein [1991:125] notes that the work of the committee was 'probably as important an event in the history of women's emancipation as of the South African war', but contemporaries failed to recognise this.

gradualist reforms favoured by most of the women discussed here.<sup>95</sup>

Early in the twentieth century some women were uncertain about whether they should associate politically or institutionally with men.<sup>96</sup> There was also a developing awareness among women's groups of the problems associated with too great a stress on the creation of separate forms of institutional development. Women speakers at a conference on university education for women in 1898 had resolved overwhelmingly against a proposed university for women.<sup>97</sup> In other areas some women accepted a need for separate organisation, but with the aim of eventual amalgamation with male colleagues. Mary Macarthur founded the National Federation of Working Women in 1906, modelling it on the general union for men formed at the end of the nineteenth century, and as Boston notes, she regarded it as 'a necessity of the time, not [as] a matter of feminist principle'.<sup>98</sup>

Some women's political organisations briefly debated separate assemblies for women. The Women's Liberal Association set up a 'Pioneer Parliament' in the late 1890s, primarily as a means of educating women for full political participation.<sup>99</sup> Separate debating and advisory forms were discussed in early issues of *The Englishwoman*.<sup>100</sup> One editorial commented on a suggestion that the Government should set up a Select Committee or Royal Commission to investigate conditions in Children's Homes:<sup>101</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Until the outbreak of World War 1, the WSPU followed a policy of non-cooperation with Government. For an account of the splits in the suffrage movement and the differences between the NUWSS, WSPU and WFL, see Caine [1997:158-167].

<sup>96</sup> There was never a strong separatist movement in Britain such as the women's settlement movement in the USA [see Kish Sklaar, 1995] or in the ethos of social motherhood promoted by German women's service associations [see Sachße, 1993].

<sup>97</sup> 4 Dec 1897 at Royal Holloway College; one of the speakers was Sophie Bryant. Another was M. Fawcett who said she was 'uncompromisingly hostile' and saw the proposal as an attempt to turn women out of old universities. Eleanor Sidgwick and Emily Davies were also opposed. [See Sidgwick Papers, Box 3; and Oppenheim, 1995: 221-2.]

<sup>98</sup> Boston [1987: 61; 149-50].

<sup>99</sup> For a description of their activities see *Quarterly Leaflet of the Women's National Liberal Association*, (26), Jan 1902: 7-8.

<sup>100</sup> The journal was founded in February 1909 after the split in the women's suffrage movement, which resulted in the formation of the Women's Freedom League, and as a response to its journal, *The Vote*. *The Englishwoman* aimed 'to reach the cultured public ...'; and supported women's enfranchisement by constitutional means. Its first editor was Elisina Grant Richards and the editorial committee was Frances Balfour, J.M. Strachey, Cicely Hamilton and Mary Lowndes.

<sup>101</sup> The suggestion was made by Guilford E. Lewis in a letter to *The Times*, 4 Jan 1909, which *The Englishwoman* reprinted.

This is the sort of question on which the experience and advice of women is essential. It will serve to emphasise a point that has a direct bearing on women's suffrage. A great many suffragists claim that questions of Domestic Policy (i.e. as distinct from measures of Imperial Policy) could be settled better and more efficiently by parliamentary committees to which men and women would be eligible in equal numbers.<sup>102</sup>

In August 1909 there was a further editorial on the merits of consultative committees of men and women to examine social problems, which concluded that they would

merely be a half-measure and would in no way determine, but would rather tend to restrict the character of the reforms effected and lengthen the process of effectuation.<sup>103</sup>

'Home Committees' as a separate form of domestic legislation were seen as more practicable and were the subject of an article in the same issue. The subject was returned to over the following months. Edward Liddell wrote proposing a women's committee to be chosen by women and allotted a Committee Room in Parliament, to

have the power of control over all Bills relating to women and children, and also the power of sending up Bills for the consideration of Parliament.

It was to be elected by Hare's representative plan,<sup>104</sup> whereby each voter had a multiple choice of any candidate, the election of 100 members to be decided by the numbers of votes for each individual. Liddell continued:

Such a body of educated women would have a greater weight than if the whole number of women were mixed with the men voters. It is true that their political power - e.g. over taxes, etc. - would not be so great, but their influence would be far greater..<sup>105</sup>

There was no direct response to this, but 'Home Committees' were endorsed in an editorial in the next issue, with the domestic analogies that had been used to support women's involvement in local government:

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<sup>102</sup> *The Englishwoman*, Vol. 1 [1], Feb 1909, p.38.

<sup>103</sup> *The Englishwoman*, 'The urgent necessity for home legislation', III[7], Aug 1909, p. 42-48.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas Hare [1806-1891] devised a scheme for proportional representation. See Hart [1992], p. 33-7 and appendix A give a description of his scheme; there is also a brief discussion [p.212-13] of women's support for the scheme.

<sup>105</sup> *The Englishwoman*, Sept 1909, [8], p.198.

Women would bring to bear on problems connected with the administration of Domestic Affairs those personal qualities which are shown in the orderly management of a home.<sup>106</sup>

However, unlike Liddell who saw the proposed committees as obviating the need for women's suffrage, *The Englishwoman* saw them as an accompaniment to equal suffrage.

A letter from Margaret Ashton<sup>107</sup> rejected the idea that women's influence should be limited to "Bills relating to women and children", and insisted that '...as an integral part of the nation, all legislation touches women exactly as men...'.<sup>108</sup> The journal continued to support women's limited inclusion on committees, although it did reprint a letter to *The Times* from one of the editorial collective, which argued that women should not confine themselves to domestic matters, but that participation was also necessary in imperial matters.<sup>109</sup>

*The Vote*<sup>110</sup> also took the general line that women's inclusion on committees should relate to their domestic roles; for example, it noted that some representation should be made to the committee inquiring into the appointment of magistrates about the need for women magistrates '...to hear cases which concern women...'.<sup>111</sup> Like other moderate women's groups, such as the WLF and the NUWW, the Women's Freedom League advocated the inclusion of women as officials and unpaid advisers in specific areas rather than on all public bodies.<sup>112</sup> The League recognised the importance of having women members on such bodies, but its main preoccupation was the franchise, and women's public work was seen as complementary to the agitation for the suffrage. That necessarily affected its actions as it was also concerned to keep some distance from the militant suffragettes, who refused all forms of official work that might be seen as co-operating with Government. Many women deplored the actions of the militants in public,

<sup>106</sup> *The Englishwoman*, Oct 1909 4[9], p.43.

<sup>107</sup> Margaret Ashton [1856-1937]; she was active in local politics in Manchester, where she was one of the first women members of the city council [in 1908]. She was also a member of the NUWSS. Her sister Marion [married to James Bryce] was a leading member of the anti-suffrage movement.

<sup>108</sup> *The Englishwoman*, Nov 1909 4[10], p.44-5.

<sup>109</sup> Lady Frances Balfour, *The Times*, 29 Sept 1909, reprinted by the *Englishwoman*.

<sup>110</sup> The journal of the Women's Freedom League [see chapter 2, p.82, n.142].

<sup>111</sup> *The Englishwoman*, 1[23], 2 April 1910, p.265.

<sup>112</sup> See also the discussion of NUWW and WLF policy in chapter 2, pp.81-85.

while privately [or at least quietly] supporting them: Lady Betty Balfour, for example, was a founding member of the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Reform Association, but also subscribed to the funds of the Women's Social and Political Union.<sup>113</sup>

Most women did not press for equal representation on those boards or committees to which they were appointed because of a sense of moderation; that reason could effect changes, and because of their belief that if they had the vote such inequalities would be removed. They might also have shared the view of W.T. Stead that there had been a fundamental shift in the direction and responsibility of the state, which would eventually result in the transformation of women's public roles. His description of that shift was a strong expression of the domestic analogy:

The modern State grows every day more and more a home and less and less a fortress. In the early days the functions of government were limited to questions of defence, the levying of armies etc. and life in the home was not within its sphere and went on unhindered, the mother having a superior voice to the father. But gradually those things which were in the mother's control became more and more a matter for boards and councils. Every day the State interferes with matters that formerly belonged to the home, and it is monstrous that when it appropriates such duties to itself only men are consulted.<sup>114</sup>

The Women's Trade Union League was more focused in its actions; it was less convinced of the value of Government inquiries although it did support the work of the women's factory inspectorate, publishing details of its prosecutions.<sup>115</sup> The League and the Women's Industrial Council concentrated their attention on the establishment of investigations into specific matters and tried to arrange for women's appointment to committees dealing with them; for example on the truck system, or home work, with limited success, as will be seen below. Both the WIC and the Women's Co-operative Guild initiated their own inquiries and used the results in presenting evidence to committees or commissions; both made substantial contributions to the Royal Commission on Divorce.<sup>116</sup> As previously noted,

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<sup>113</sup> For her there were personal as well as political reasons; her sister, Lady Constance Lytton, was a leading member of the WSPU and had been arrested several times. [See Lytton and Warton, 1914.]

<sup>114</sup> 'Mr W.T. Stead on the Emancipation of Women' by Mary O'Kennedy, *The Vote*, III[71], 4 March 1911, p.225.

<sup>115</sup> In its journal, the *Women's Trade Union Review*, published quarterly.

<sup>116</sup> See discussion and references in chapter 5, pp. 227-29.

the WCG was preoccupied with representation on the Co-operative Council, and although it sent deputations and memorials to the Government, it did not insist on women's participation as committee members.

It was usually seen as a matter for congratulation that women were appointed to committees at all, despite the frequent criticisms that there were not enough of them. The *Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Review* was one of the most consistent both in its reporting of women's progress in these and other public positions, and in its critique. It commended the appointment of Mary Scharlieb, Louise Creighton and Elizabeth Burgwin to the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases in 1913, but added

though the fact that women are asked to serve at all is a great mark of progress, we confess to a feeling of disappointment that, on a Commission consisting of fifteen members, such a very small proportion should be women, ....<sup>117</sup>

The WLF was also disappointed; it had submitted the names of three women, none of whom were chosen.<sup>118</sup>

In 1913 the Indian academic S. Mitra proposed an assembly for women that would debate bills on specific subjects before their final passage through the Commons,<sup>119</sup> using the Indian Consultative Council as his model. The proposed women's assembly was to have no power to change bills, only to make recommendations.<sup>120</sup> By that time proposals for such forms of advisory committee had been dropped by all except the women's anti-suffrage movement. In 1913, Mary Ward organised a Joint Committee of MPs and 'representative' women with the aim of ensuring that Parliament was made aware of the views of women. She wrote to Louise Creighton that she hoped that it would 'develop into a permanent adjunct of the House of Commons'.<sup>121</sup> The committee was not mentioned in the records of most of the women's groups studied here; the *CUWFR* noted its creation, but was doubtful that it would achieve its objective as its women

<sup>117</sup> *CUWFR*, No. 18, Jan-March 1914, p.358.

<sup>118</sup> WLF, *Annual Report*, 1914.

<sup>119</sup> 'Voice for Women - without Votes', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXIV, (44), Nov 1913, p.988-1007.

<sup>120</sup> The assembly was probably not intended as a serious proposal for reform in Britain, but was designed to draw attention to the lack of political power of Indians in their own country, rather than as support for British women's political advancement.

<sup>121</sup> Letter quoted in Trevelyan [1923:240-41].

members had no power as elected representatives. An editorial asked:

What guarantee can be given us that the female members of the Council really represent their fellow women and more especially those of the working classes? On the other hand, if they are not truly representative, why should Parliament listen to their advice?<sup>122</sup>

The committee held four meetings in 1914,<sup>123</sup> but thereafter seems to have been either absorbed into, or superseded by, the plethora of semi-official groupings that were set up to deal with the various social and economic problems produced by the outbreak of war.<sup>124</sup>

At an early stage of the First World war, the NUWW recognised the need for co-operation among women to combat such problems, and it organised a conference in October 1915 to collect and disseminate information about relief schemes.<sup>125</sup> The Government were slower to use and co-ordinate women's services,<sup>126</sup> although they appointed May Tennant to a Cabinet Committee to advise on measures to prevent and relieve distress. Women's inclusion on other war-time committees was limited in the first two years of the war, but intensified after 1916 under Lloyd George's Coalition Government. The remainder of the chapter examines women's war-time committee work.

#### 4. The Central Committee on Women's Employment

At the beginning of the war the Government created the second all-women advisory committee in much the same spirit as it had created the first in 1901, although its membership was a much stronger indication of the breadth and experience that women had achieved. It was chaired by Lady

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<sup>122</sup> *CUWFR*, April-June 1914, No. 19, p.375.

<sup>123</sup> *The Times*, 2 Feb 1915, p.10. This also announced the reconvening of the committee under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Nicholson and a forthcoming meeting on 3 March, but no account of this meeting has been traced.

<sup>124</sup> Janet Trevelyan [1923: 294] noted that Mrs Ward 'used the machinery of the "Joint Parliamentary Advisory Council" ' during her campaign in 1918 to include provisions for the education of physically handicapped children in the Fisher Education Bill, but that in fact most of the work was done from her own office.

<sup>125</sup> 'Women's Share in the Work of Reconstruction after the War'. Louise Creighton gave the presidential address, and was instrumental in the various working groups and committees that were set up afterwards. See *NUWW Occasional Papers*, 1915.

<sup>126</sup> I am here referring only to women's services as advisers, either through committee work of the kind they had been doing for some 30 years previously, or in the women's departments that were set up in several Ministries during the war. For an account of women's war-time employment, see Braybon [1989].



Crewe with May Tennant as Secretary, and had representatives of the three main political parties, including the first working-class woman to serve on such a committee: Margaret Bondfield, who had started her career as a shopworker, and was by this time a leading member of the women's labour movement.<sup>127</sup>

The recognition of women's unemployment as a problem and the presence of four Labour representatives<sup>128</sup> on a committee set up to deal with it was an advance, but it was limited. The committee had been formed from charitable motives to administer the Queen Mary's Workshops Fund, and to set up schemes for the training and employment of women whose work had been adversely affected by the war.<sup>129</sup> As Boston [1986: 96-97] points out, women trade unionists had been critical of the initial organisation of the scheme, which would have favoured volunteer workers over skilled women,<sup>130</sup> and although this was changed the committee had only limited success.<sup>131</sup> Its failure was hardly surprising given its structure; it had no executive power over Government funds and no Departmental links, except informal ones through brothers or husbands,<sup>132</sup> and was overdetermined by its philanthropic personnel, and by its terms of reference. Like the Ladies Committee in 1901, it sent out mixed signals: to working women that their unemployment was being dealt with; to middle class women that their public service was welcomed in this connection; and to male workers and trade unionists that this was charity and therefore unconnected with the serious business of men's work and wages.

One of the Government's many pressing needs during the early stages of the war had been to ensure that there was sufficient labour to meet the needs of industrial production. That involved the replacement of those skilled men who had joined the armed forces by unskilled men and

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<sup>127</sup> For the names of the other committee members see appendix 2, no. 54.

<sup>128</sup> Margaret Bondfield; Susan Lawrence; Marion Phillips; and Mary Macarthur.

<sup>129</sup> For a description of the creation of the committee and of its work, see Hamilton [1925:136-142].

<sup>130</sup> The Queen Mary Workshops were also criticised by Sylvia Pankhurst; see Mitchell [1966: 278], Braybon [1989: 44].

<sup>131</sup> See Thom [1982: 41-2]; Braybon [1989:44-45].

<sup>132</sup> Six of the women were married to current or past members of the Government. Lily Montagu was the sister of E.S. Montagu who held positions in both the Asquith and Lloyd George Governments. Mary Macarthur's husband, Will Anderson, was a Member of Parliament.

women.<sup>133</sup> The agreements that guaranteed the jobs of such skilled workers were negotiated in separate committees, which did not include women;<sup>134</sup> and even when they did, they were offshoots of, or subordinate to others with more powerful members.<sup>135</sup>

In the munitions industry, where women workers were increasingly needed, the dangers of setting long-term precedents in their employment were recognised by a number of civil servants, including William Beveridge and Hubert Llewellyn Smith. They were involved in discussions on setting up a women's employment committee, whose role was mainly to be that of persuading employees and workers that the temporary employment of women would not threaten long-term job stability for men. Llewellyn Smith was opposed to such a committee and advised that the Central Committee already existed for this purpose. He suggested that as Mrs Tennant was already a member of this she should be consulted 'as to the extent to which we could utilise it for this purpose'.<sup>136</sup> Like Beveridge,<sup>137</sup> he did not want to involve such a committee in any form of negotiations with workers or employers and warned that if a new committee was formed its terms of reference needed to be very carefully written 'otherwise the committee will have the whole range of women's employment to deal with'.<sup>138</sup> The committee that was eventually set up under Sir George Newman in 1915 was concerned with the health and safety of women munitions workers and was not instructed to consider their pay or post-war conditions.<sup>139</sup>

The original terms of reference of the Central Committee on Women's Employment had set it an impossible task in the combination of the

<sup>133</sup> This is discussed in relation to women workers in Thom [1982] and Braybon [1989].

<sup>134</sup> For example, the Committees on Agricultural, and Commercial and Industrial Policy established under Asquith's first Reconstruction Committee. [See Ministry of Reconstruction Report, 1918, Cd.9231.] See also Thom [1982: 51].

<sup>135</sup> The 1916-19 Committee on Women's Employment, 12 of whose 23 members were women, was far less influential than the two committees mentioned above, and many aspects of its work were dependent on them.

<sup>136</sup> Lloyd George was in favour of a new committee and wanted Mrs Tennant to be its chairman. [Addison to Llewellyn Smith 18 Aug 1915, Addison Mss. 2[15].]

<sup>137</sup> See his discussions on the subject with Vaughan Nash below, p.174.

<sup>138</sup> Llewellyn Smith to Addison 30 Aug 1915, Addison Mss. 2[15]. See also correspondence between Alfred Herbert of the Ministry of Munitions and Addison on women's pay, where Herbert observed that 'I doubt whether it is necessary to take existing Women's Unions seriously into account ...'. [28 Aug 1915, Addison Mss. 64[3]; and Addison's notes 'Employment of Women. Suggested Committee', 27 Aug 1915, Addison Mss. 64[2].]

<sup>139</sup> The Committee on the Health and Safety of Munition Workers [1915-17].

administration of charity and the organisation of women's work, and as the war-time economy created a need for greater numbers of women workers, many of its original aims were taken over by other agencies,<sup>140</sup> although it continued in existence to co-ordinate relief schemes. Deborah Thom [1982: 51] has observed that the failure to include women representatives on the committees negotiating war-time employment conditions

..was not intended as a deliberate exclusion - the discussions were based in the need to render new policies acceptable to engineers and other skilled workers without whose co-operation they would be impossible...

However, the effect of the Central Committee's work, combined with the imperatives she has noted, was to circumscribe women's employment issues, and to distance them from any agreements reached with men. Furthermore, the equation of women's unemployment relief with a form of charity contributed to the perception of women's work, and the measures to counter the lack of it, as a private rather than a public matter.<sup>141</sup>

A brief account of some aspects of the work of the war-time Women's Employment Committee [1916-19] illustrates how women's concerns continued to be marginalised even when they were involved in the consultation process. It was a sub-committee of Asquith's first Reconstruction Committee, and although not an all-female committee it did have a majority [by one] of women members. It offers a further example of how women's inclusion in the committee system itself contributed to the precedents and limits in women's committee work, which ensured that the issues they discussed remained on the margins of the advisory structure. Some of the limits may have been accidental outcomes of other administrative practices, although even these were often defined by conscious prejudice. There was, for example, a strong resistance to the appointment of women to the higher administrative grades of the civil

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<sup>140</sup> For example, the women's departments in the Board of Agriculture and the Ministry of National Service.

<sup>141</sup> Thom [1982 and 1986: 279, 281-82] also points out how the practices of women's trades unions promoted the idea that women workers were defenceless. She also noted that the National Federation of Women Workers had 'turned itself into what amounted to a union of women war workers, and was committed to the removal of all dilutees after the war'. [1988: 313]. Such attitudes and practices reinforced the idea that women were the givers and the objects of charity and thus a private rather than a public charge.

service.<sup>142</sup> That meant that the attitudes and prejudices about women of those few women who did attain such office might have assumed greater importance. Like women appointed to committees, such women were usually assumed by their male colleagues to be experts on women, and had indeed often been appointed to undertake specific duties relating to women's education, welfare or employment. During the war, they were seconded to Departments or sections that dealt with women's employment or war-time service, for example, in the Ministry of National Service or the Board of Agriculture. Such committees and departments could thus be ring-fenced by having women members and women staff.

A Women's Employment Committee had been suggested by Vaughan Nash,<sup>143</sup> who spoke to Beveridge on the subject in April 1916, saying that because of the expansion of women's work during the war 'it was necessary to take an entirely new view in future of women's capacities.' Beveridge reported their conversation to Llewellyn Smith:

He contemplated apparently the necessity of revising the Factory Acts, of establishing minimum wages for women, etc. etc. I pointed out that presumably it might be left to the Home Office to revise the Factory Acts; that the question of a minimum wage for women was largely one of the extension of the Trade Board Act; that there was a danger of the women's employment committee overlapping the treatment of the restoration of pre-war conditions (which is partly a woman's question and partly a man's question). He recognised the necessity of avoiding the latter and made it clear that he had not contemplated a committee which would in any way deal with restoration of prewar conditions. .... Mr Vaughan Nash contemplated that the committee's attitude in regard to the Government pledges for restoration of prewar conditions would simply come to the point of saying that those pledges limited the scope for the employment of women and would not further concern themselves with the matter.

Beveridge conceded:

[there] might be some good in a committee, but it would clearly need to be very carefully chosen. Mr Vaughan Nash's general view in regard to all the committees was that they should be secret and not

<sup>142</sup> Meta Zimmeck [1988] has described some of the reactions of male civil servants to what they regarded as the encroachment of women into their professional sphere, and the ways in which some women adapted to such prejudice.

<sup>143</sup> Vaughan Nash [1861-1932] was a Fabian journalist who had entered Government service as Asquith's Private Secretary, becoming Secretary to the First Reconstruction Committee in 1916. [See also Johnson, 1968: 21-25.] He was married to Rosalind Shore Smith [see appendix 1].

chosen by working in bodies for representatives. [sic]<sup>144</sup>

The committee had a majority of civil service members, representing the Home Office, the Ministries of Labour and of Munitions and the Boards of Agriculture and Education, of whom six were women. Three of its members also belonged to the Committee on Relations between Employers and Employed,<sup>145</sup> but apart from this it had no cross-connections with the other committees appointed by Asquith in connection with the first Reconstruction Committee, and few in either the second Reconstruction Committee or the Ministry of Reconstruction.

Its first chairman was Sir John Simon [he was succeeded by Major J.W. Hills in 1917], and at the first meetings in August 1916, sub-committees were formed on agriculture [this was subsequently divided into separate groups for England and Scotland]; clerical and commercial work; industrial work; and procedure. This last group was formed to classify matters coming under the scope of the Industrial group and to form sub-committees to deal with the subjects thus classified. The committee was weighted down with its own subsidiary groups and there was a problem of parallel or overlapping work between it and other reconstruction committees and those of other departments.<sup>146</sup>

The agriculture sub-committee, for example, was superfluous almost before it started its work. In spring 1915, the Board of Trade and the Board of Agriculture began a campaign to promote women's employment on the land including the formation of local voluntary committees, usually known as 'Women's County War Agriculture Committees'. County committees had districts with a representative in each who worked with either a district committee or a village registrar: there were 1,060 District representatives

<sup>144</sup> Beveridge to Sir H. Llewellyn Smith, 28 April 1916, 'Notes on talk with Vaughan Nash and Mr H.E. Dale, Passfield Papers, XII (1). Llewellyn Smith had previous experience of the creation of women's employment committees and a similar wariness of them. See above, p.172.

<sup>145</sup> Miss S. Lawrence, J.J. Mallon, and Miss M. Wilson. Miss Lawrence and Mallon were subsequently appointed with Beveridge to the Civil War Workers' Committee of the Second Reconstruction Committee.

<sup>146</sup> Although it should be noted that the problem of overlap and the lack of departmental authority was one that generally hampered the initiatives of all the Reconstruction Committees. Johnson [1968: 32-33] argues that the form of the first Reconstruction Committee was better designed to overcome such problems because of its inclusion of so many Ministers. However, although the first chairman of the Women's Employment Committee, Sir John Simon, had held ministerial office, his successor, Major Hills, was the only one among the nine chairmen of the first Reconstruction Committee not to have done so.

and 4,000 Village Registrars by December 1916.<sup>147</sup> That structure was taken over by the Board of Agriculture's Food Production Department, which had a Woman's Branch directed by Meriel Talbot.<sup>148</sup> The Branch increased the supervisory network with 54 county organisers grouped under 19 District Commissioners. The Board of Agriculture was primarily involved in war work rather than post-war planning [the primary concern of the WEC], but there was considerable duplication of activity, and after the production of its report in October 1917, the WEC agriculture sub-committee was disbanded.

The real power to advise on post-war agricultural policy lay with Lord Selborne's Agricultural Committee, appointed by Asquith at the same time as the WEC in 1916, as part of the first Reconstruction Committee.<sup>149</sup> It contained no women and was dominated by landowners, with no members from the civil service. Mrs Wilkins, a member of the WEC and a senior administrator of the Board of Agriculture's Women's Branch, put forward a resolution at the WEC meeting of 31 October 1917 that the extent of women's post-war employment in agriculture depended on the attitude of Lord Selborne's committee and that two members of the WEC should see Lord Selborne and obtain a statement of his committee's views. He agreed only that they might see an advance copy of the committee's report.<sup>150</sup>

Other aspects of the WEC's work concerned equal pay and women's right to retain their employment after the war. The latter was included in the committee's investigations despite Nash's pre-emption of its conclusions [see Beveridge quotes above]; largely because of the insistence of Susan Lawrence, Mona Wilson and J. Mallon<sup>151</sup> in drawing attention to these issues. Hills wrote to Addison that they wanted to insert a paragraph in the report indicating that they had not overlooked the subject of restoration of prewar practices in assessing the future employment of women, but that until

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<sup>147</sup> See Board of Agriculture: Report of Women's Branch of Food Production, 1 Jan 1918. For women's agricultural work in World War One see Condell and Liddiard [1987].

<sup>148</sup> Her aunt, Lavinia Talbot, had been one of the original members of the WEC, but had resigned in 1916.

<sup>149</sup> For details of the Reconstruction Committees and the creation of the Ministry, see below, pp. 178 ff. and appendix 4.

<sup>150</sup> WEC minutes 8 Nov 1917. Passfield Mss.

<sup>151</sup> James Joseph Mallon [1875-1961], social and economic reformer, involved in campaigns for a national minimum wage and was honorary secretary of the Trade Boards Advisory Council. He was the warden of Toynbee Hall from 1919 until 1954.

they knew the outcome of the proceedings of the highly secretive Pledges Committee they could not make other than hypothetical predictions.<sup>152</sup> That involved the Ministry in a wider Cabinet dispute. Churchill argued that there could be no return to pre-war restrictive practices, while Addison, Roberts and Horne,<sup>153</sup> despite their agreement that the return to previous conditions would damage Britain's economic recovery, were none the less determined that the Government must honour the promises made to trades unions and employers. That had been discussed by the Cabinet in October 1918,<sup>154</sup> and an announcement made that pledges would be redeemed on 6 November, some time before the WEC had recorded its dilemma. The disparity again highlights women's marginality in the committee system [as well as everywhere else]. It was not that individual women were unaware of, or indifferent to, what was going on, but with no direct voice in Cabinet they were the last to be considered.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Hills to Addison, 19 Dec 1918, Beveridge Reconstruction Papers, Box 6, Doc. 141.

<sup>153</sup> G. Roberts was Minister for Labour Aug 1917-Jan 1919; Sir R. Horne succeeded him, becoming President of the Board of Trade in March 1920 and Chancellor of the Exchequer in April 1921. In 1918 he was third Lord of the Admiralty.

<sup>154</sup> See Johnson [1968: 263-67].

<sup>155</sup> The creation of separate women's sections within the Ministry of Reconstruction further isolated the WEC. Susan Lawrence became a member of the Women's Advisory Committee and was on a number of other sub-committees connected with Reconstruction; and Gertrude Tuckwell was a member of a sub-committee concerned with labour interests in the engineering industry, but in general neither its male or female members were appointed across the range of the Ministry's committees, which would in theory have enabled some wider representation of women's employment interests.

## Chapter 4

## Part 2

5. Women and Reconstruction

Women achieved their highest representation on committees within the Ministry of Reconstruction, both generally and in the number of all-women committees [see discussion above and table 4.1]. The concentration of women had some positive effects for the women involved in that they were able use their committee work to promote their particular political views or to forward their professional opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Equally, many of the Ministry's inquiries revealed the range of work undertaken by women, particularly that of unpaid volunteers,<sup>2</sup> as well as the strength of political feeling and social concern that were revealed in debates about reconstruction issues. However, the main result of the women's committees was to reinforce the limits of what were seen as women's issues and to isolate them from the main concerns of the Government.

The Ministry of Reconstruction was created by Lloyd George's Coalition Government in August 1917 under the New Ministries Act in July 1917. It was to be

devoted solely to preparing for the difficulties of the future ... the Act asserts the primary importance in relation to Reconstruction of organised thought as distinct from executive action. The country is for the first time equipped with a Department not devoted to research in the field of the physical sciences, but to research into questions of political science, and to the encouragement of action on the lines of the results ascertained.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Beatrice Webb saw her work on Reconstruction as a means to continue her campaign against the old Poor Law, and, like Marion Phillips and Susan Lawrence, she was also concerned with wider socialist programmes of reform. Civil servants, such as Adelaide Anderson or Felicia Durham, wanted to consolidate both the position of their individual Departments and the general position of women within the service. Others used their committee service to promote or defend the work of various women's services; for example, Katherine Furse worked to improve the status of the VADs as well as campaigning for a Women's Army Corps; the Marchioness of Londonderry worked to promote the Women's Legion; and the Duchess of Marlborough recommended the expertise of members of the Women's Municipal Party, both for the war effort, and to remind the administrative and political establishment of the aims of the Society.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Furse produced several reports on voluntary service, particularly in relation to Red Cross workers. See Symonds Mss., DM1279, especially Box 3, Files 4 and 23. For one of the most comprehensive listings of women's associations providing war-time voluntary service, see the returns to the Women's Department of the Ministry of National Service Questionnaires on women's organisations. [20 Nov 1918, PRO.NATS1.1294]

<sup>3</sup> PRO.RECO1/776.



Dr Christopher Addison<sup>4</sup> was the Minister, and the former Advisory Council of the second Reconstruction Committee<sup>5</sup> was divided into five sections, whose membership was arranged so that all the principal interests previously represented on the Council would have a place. Each section was to have access to all material collected on its subject, while officials in charge of the six administrative branches [see appendix] would attend their meetings and take part in discussions.<sup>6</sup>

There were thus two structures within the Ministry: advisory, formed of outside experts; and administrative, staffed by civil servants. Their work was to be subject to the fullest public consideration: not to be 'a policy of restoring things as they were, but of creating a new and better order'.<sup>7</sup> However, there was anxiety about the possible activities of the Advisory Council; and Addison wrote to Lloyd George asking him to wind up the affairs of the former committee as tactfully as possible, adding that

while the services of the committee in investigating subjects with which they are familiar have been of very great value, the committee sitting as a whole has been proved less effective.<sup>8</sup>

His views were supported by Michael Heseltine,<sup>9</sup> who also stressed individual rather than collective advice. He wanted the announcement of the Advisory Council to be made as soon as possible:

Otherwise ... we shall not be able to withstand the agitation which will arise for the addition of people of every sort and kind to the C'tee. ... what is wanted is the individual & not the collective advice of the members or most of them. Similarly I should tell such candidates for membership as the nominees of the Federation of British Industries that you hope to have the advantage of consulting them from time to time on matters in which the Federation is interested.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher Addison (1869-1951); elected a Liberal MP in 1910; he was a supporter of Lloyd George and advised him on health matters. He became the first Minister of Munitions in 1915; President of the Local Government Board in 1919, and in the same year the first Minister of Health. He lost his seat in 1922 and later joined the Labour Party, serving in the Labour Governments of 1929-31 and 1945-51.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 4.

<sup>6</sup> Details taken from Ministry of Reconstruction Memorandum 'Constitution and Work of the Advisory Council', undated, RECO1/751.

<sup>7</sup> *Government Record*, undated cutting in PRO.RECO1/776.

<sup>8</sup> 7 Aug 1917, PRO.RECO1/662.

<sup>9</sup> He was an Assistant Secretary at the Ministry and Secretary to the Machinery of Government Committee, and subsequently involved in the foundation of Ministry of Health. He married Dr Janet Campbell in 1934 [see appendix 1].

<sup>10</sup> 28 Aug 1917, PRO.RECO1/662.

The emphasis on individual advisers had particular implications for women as committee members. The nature of women's expertise had already been defined and was well established as specific to women's issues, and thus not required in certain policy areas; whereas that of men was related to their professional, business or administrative experience, and was seen as much more widely relevant.<sup>11</sup> The Advisory Council of the Ministry of Reconstruction, as finally constituted, did not meet as a body since it comprised the members of each of the five sections, 66 people in all, of whom 16 were women. Women were well represented in Sections III, and IV, and were in a majority in Section V,<sup>12</sup> but there were only two [Susan Lawrence and Viscountess Rhondda] in Section II, and none in Section I. That meant a reduction in their ability to influence overall policy matters, as the work of the sections was closely demarcated and there was no longer [as there had been in the Second Reconstruction Committee] a central committee with members who reported back from other committees. Addison instituted a Chairmen's Committee, which comprised the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Sections and on which one woman served initially [Lady Emmott as vice-chairman of Section V]. However, after the formation of the Women's Advisory Committee, she no longer attended meetings of the Chairmen's Committee; and was the only vice-chairman not listed as a member of that committee in the Ministry's 1918 report.<sup>13</sup>

Women were also conspicuously absent from the membership of the new committees instituted by Addison. There were 14 of these, which reported directly to the Minister and not through the Sections; most had no women members. Mary Macarthur was a member of the Wages Awards Committee and Beatrice Webb of the Advisory Housing Panel. Gertrude Tuckwell and Mary Macarthur were members of a Labour Panel of the Engineering Trades (New Industries) Committee, for which class lines were clearly drawn. The main committee [of which the women were not members] had a majority of employers and the Labour Panel's members were trade

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<sup>11</sup> Beatrice Webb refused such identifications with women's issues, and did not serve on the Women's Advisory Committee. She also turned down Vaughan Nash's first invitation to serve on a committee on maternity provision for the second Reconstruction Committee, and noted her lack of interest in the work of the Committee for Women in Industry. [*Diaries*, 8 Dec 1918: Mackenzie, 1984: 325.]

<sup>12</sup> Here there were eight women members out of a total of 13.

<sup>13</sup> Report on Work of Ministry of Reconstruction, 1918, xiii, Cd.9231.

unionists.<sup>14</sup> Another body which under the previous Reconstruction Committee had had women members was the Civil War Workers Committee [Mrs M.J. Bell-Richards, Susan Lawrence and Marion Phillips]. In its new incarnation as the Civil War Workers Resettlement Co-ordination Committee, no women were appointed.

The segregation of women applied also to the civil servants in the new Ministry. Constance Smith had earlier noted that

Our "hierarchy" goes on in its old way, &, though every man of capacity has been taken from the Department, seems determined not to give the most experienced of the women a shred of power,<sup>15</sup>

Miss Smith had been co-Secretary to the Women's Employment Committee of the previous Reconstruction Committee, and in the new Ministry a number of other women acted as secretaries to sub-committees dealing with women's issues, as well as being co-secretaries 'for questions affecting women' in Sections III and V.<sup>16</sup> The administrative branches were headed by civil servants with the rank of Assistant Secretary<sup>17</sup> with women officers in subordinate positions. Branches 'C' (Industrial Organisation) and 'E' (Social Development) were to have

regular women Branch Officers, under the responsible Assistant Secretaries, but [that,] in the present state of development reached by the work of the Office, it is not desirable to continue the appointment of a woman Assistant Secretary,<sup>18</sup> and it is not designed to set up a special Branch for dealing with all questions affecting women.<sup>19</sup>

The woman officers were Miss L. Clapham<sup>20</sup> for Branch C and Miss A.K. Leach for Branch E; they also had secretarial duties in relation to the

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix I of the Report on Work of Ministry of Reconstruction, 1918, xiii, Cd.9231.

<sup>15</sup> Letter to Violet Markham, 1 Feb 1917, Markham Mss., 4/4.

<sup>16</sup> PRO.RECO1/751. 'Constitution and Work of the Advisory Council'.

<sup>17</sup> This was a principal grade within the civil service and should not be confused with the position of secretary to a committee, although such persons might also hold high civil service rank.

<sup>18</sup> The appointment referred to was that of Mona Wilson, who had temporarily been given the position, which she held equally with A.C. Greenwood in Branch C, but it was understood that she would revert to her previous rank when re-assigned. See memo from Eustace Davies [Secretary to the Advisory Council and one of the Ministry's senior administrators] to Nash, 'Office organisation', 15 March 1918, PRO.RECO1/201.

<sup>19</sup> 'Note on Conference on Office Organisation', 9 April 1918, attended by Addison, Vaughan Nash, Eustace Davies and Percy Barter. PRO.RECO1/201.

<sup>20</sup> She was subsequently assigned to the Women's Department of the Ministry of National Service.

corresponding Sections of the Ministry's Advisory Council: Sections III and V respectively. In both cases the description of their work was that they would work 'under the instructions' of the Assistant Secretary, while the duties of male Branch Officers or Assistant Branch Officers were defined as assistance to, or by arrangement with, the Assistant Secretary.<sup>21</sup> In the Sections and in the Ministry's other committees women civil servants were appointed to the secretaryships only of those that had women members.<sup>22</sup>

### 5a. The Women's Advisory Committee

As noted earlier, consultative committees of women to work as an adjunct of Government had been proposed occasionally [although not by Governments<sup>23</sup>] since the intensified agitation for women's political rights from the mid-nineteenth century, but this was the first such committee to be set up on a semi-permanent basis,<sup>24</sup> and was not created until after the passage of the Representation of the People Act in 1918. Women's enfranchisement had clearly influenced Eustace Davies when he proposed the creation of a separate women's committee. He wrote to Vaughan Nash that they

must create some sort of organisation to advise and support us over questions of difficulty affecting the future of women in connection with Reconstruction problems. There is a strong feeling among women generally that the Ministry should give considerable importance to questions affecting women, and, of course, with the large voting power which will in future be possessed by women, it is most necessary that our handling of such questions should be guided by an element of practical and influential experience in women's work.

It had already been decided to appoint a number of additional women as members of Sections III and V of the original Advisory Council, and he continued:

<sup>21</sup> Memo, Davies to Nash, 4 April 1918, PRO.RECO1/201.

<sup>22</sup> Women were rarely appointed as committee secretaries. See p. 112, n. 40.

<sup>23</sup> See above, Section 3.

<sup>24</sup> The Central Committee on Women's Employment took on an advisory role, but was primarily intended as an administrative body. There were also women's departments within both the Board of Agriculture and the Ministry of National Service, which were run by women who were prominent within the advisory committee system: Meriel Talbot and Edith Lyttelton at the Board; and May Tennant and Violet Markham at the Ministry. Both departments suffered from the same sidelining of women's issues detailed here, particularly at the Ministry of National Service where the Women's Department was in existence for only six months [between February and August 1917] before the bulk of its responsibilities were taken over by the Ministry of Labour and the War Office.

we might have an informal standing Committee analogous to the Chairmen's Committee, composed of some of the most prominent women Members of the Council, meeting at regular intervals.<sup>25</sup>

Lady Emmott, who was already vice-Chairman of Section V, had agreed to serve as Chairman of the new Advisory Committee, and after discussion with her he approached Margaret Tuke, Susan Lawrence, Lady Rhondda, Lucy Deane Streatfeild and Maud Pember Reeves. Davies stressed that he had not yet spoken directly to them and would not make any commitments to them until he knew what ministerial support he could expect but noted that:

The question of the future of women is one which we cannot altogether ignore in the organisation of the Ministry.<sup>26</sup>

The initiative for the committee seems to have been from the Ministry's senior civil servants [Davies and Nash] rather than from either the Minister or from members of the Sections. Neither Addison's printed diary nor his manuscript papers indicate that he showed any great interest in the idea of a separate women's committee at this stage.<sup>27</sup> Although Davies may have been influenced by notions of equity in seeking to extend the representation of women in an advisory capacity, part of the motivation might be found in civil service resistance to the promotion or recruitment of women at its higher levels. Earlier in the year, Davies had pointed out that there was no intention to appoint a woman Assistant Secretary to advise on matters concerning women, and the women's committee was thus needed to advise the administrative branches.<sup>28</sup> That could then preclude the need for a formal civil service appointment with its precedential implications for women's recruitment.<sup>29</sup> Here, as in the Board of Agriculture and in the

<sup>25</sup> Davies to Vaughan Nash, 3 Oct 1918. PRO.RECO1/750.

<sup>26</sup> Davies to Vaughan Nash, 3 Oct 1918. PRO.RECO1/750.

<sup>27</sup> The Addison papers were being re-catalogued at the time of my research visit and I was unable to undertake a systematic search for references to women's work in the Ministry. The printed *Diaries* [1934] have some references to the work of women in producing recommendations for housing [Vol. II, 529-31] but do not mention the WAC.

<sup>28</sup> Davies to Nash, 15 March 1918, PRO.RECO1/201. Mona Wilson - the most senior woman civil servant in the Ministry - does not seem to have been involved in the discussions about the appointment of the WAC. In the memorandum cited above Davies had noted that '... there should be no woman Assistant Secretary, though there should be women Branch Officers in Branches (C) and (D). Miss Wilson will therefore revert to her Department in due course ...'.

<sup>29</sup> See Zimmeck [1988] for a discussion of some of the more overt resistances of male civil servants, expressed through notions of specifically male or female expertise.

Ministry of National Service,<sup>30</sup> the appointment of women outsiders can be seen as a containment strategy as well as one that conformed to the contemporary, fashionable practice of involving outside experts. Hence, although senior male civil servants could be suspicious and sometimes resentful of male experts from outside,<sup>31</sup> they might have been more accommodating towards women working in a voluntary capacity.

Women's influence had already been felt in the Ministry through the continued activities of the Women's Employment Committee,<sup>32</sup> and the far more forceful Women's Housing Committee,<sup>33</sup> initially a committee of Section V of the Ministry and then a sub-committee of the Women's Advisory Committee. The creation of the WAC certainly gave women a chance to discuss issues of pressing importance, but there was even less possibility of liaison with their male counterparts: official mediation took place through Davies who acted as secretary to this and the Chairmen's Council.<sup>34</sup> There were of course unofficial means of communication; at least one member was deliberately chosen for her connections. Lady Birchenough's modest denial of any 'special or expert knowledge' when accepting her appointment to the committee may have incorrectly assumed that these were the sole qualities that had determined her nomination. Davies wrote to Lady Emmott:

the Minister told Sir Henry<sup>35</sup> he was very anxious for her to join this informal Committee; and I think you will find her really helpful. Her presence will also help you to keep in closer touch with the men

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<sup>30</sup> The records of the two Departments and the accounts of them by some of their members give some indication of their subordinate positions in the administrative hierarchy. The Women's Agriculture Department was large and had a degree of executive autonomy which was not shared by the women's sections at National Service or Reconstruction; see correspondence and reports in PRO.RECO1/964/2578. Part of its functions and staff were transferred to the newly created Ministry of Food in Jan 1917, and for one account of women's work there see Peel [1919: 139-40] who noted that at the first meeting of heads of section of the new Ministry she was the only woman, and that she drew attention to the fact that it had not been proposed to include women on the Food Control Committees that were to be created. A recommendation that at least one woman should be included was later changed to read 'several women', but she observed that usually only one was chosen, and that none were ever appointed as Food Commissioners. Violet Markham referred to the problems of women at the Ministry of National Service [Jones, 1994: 84-92]; the problems are also revealed in its surviving correspondence and records, see PRO.NATS1/1317 and /1297.

<sup>31</sup> See John Turner [1988], especially p.222.

<sup>32</sup> See above, pp. 173-77.

<sup>33</sup> Discussed below, pp. 190-201.

<sup>34</sup> Miss Leach was the assistant secretary to the WAC and did most of the work; a Mr Renolds was her counterpart on the Chairmen's Committee.

<sup>35</sup> Sir Henry Birchenough was chairman of the Chairmen's Committee.

Chairmen, as Sir Henry is Chairman of that Committee, and discusses many of these questions at home.<sup>36</sup>

Other members expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which appointments for the representation of Labour interests had been made. Several women objected to the Ministry nominating such representatives when there were organisations that could have done so. Susan Lawrence felt that the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC and the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations should have been consulted. Gertrude Tuckwell agreed and pointed out that she felt '... placed in a somewhat embarrassing position as the result of having been nominated by the Ministry ...'. The issue was generally felt to be one of public confidence in both the women's committee and the Ministry. Addison replied that as the Reconstruction Committees dealt with a broad variety of questions, often of a technical nature, it was difficult to choose suitable people, and that he had not permitted any other organisations to nominate members either of the committees, or of the Sections of the Council.<sup>37</sup>

His answer was not strictly true as organisations and individuals were frequently asked to suggest committee personnel (although there was no guarantee that they would actually be appointed) and suggests that the women's committee was subject to even more stage-management than usual.<sup>38</sup> Addison had recently appointed a Standing Council to determine post-war priority schemes whose constitution directly contradicted his statement to the WAC. It had originally been decided that the nominations for this should be made by a small group of civil servants and members of the Government.<sup>39</sup> They spent some weeks producing and exchanging lists of names after which Addison called a meeting of various outside men,

<sup>36</sup> 24 Oct 1918, RECO1/752. See also references to her appointment in chapter 2, p. 61.

<sup>37</sup> WAC minutes, 21 Oct 1918, PRO.RECO1/750. See also, above, Addison's note to Lloyd George about the need to limit the work of the Advisory Council and Heseltine's comments, p. 179.

<sup>38</sup> It should not be assumed that such strategies were entirely a Government preserve: at a meeting of the Committee on the Demobilisation of Voluntary Workers, Gertrude Tuckwell advised against calling a conference of men's and women's organisations on the matter and suggested a committee instead as '... it would not be possible to stage manage it [a conference] sufficiently to ensure that good results would be obtained. [Minutes, 15 March 1918, PRO.RECO1/749/5079.]

<sup>39</sup> Addison; the Minister of Labour; the President of the Board of Trade; Col. Byrne, chairman, War Priorities Committee; Sir Henry Birchenough; Vaughan Nash; P. Barter; W.J. Larke, Ministry of Munitions. [6 Aug 1918, PRO.RECO1/722/7890.]

including representatives of employers and labour who had been asked to submit nominations for the formation of the Council.<sup>40</sup> As Susan Lawrence was a member of that Council, appointed in September 1918, it seems likely that she was aware of the circumstances of its appointment, and was suggesting that similar procedures should have been used to select women advisers.

The concerns of some of the members of the Women's Advisory Committee, raised by the Ministry's focus on representation, show some of the practical difficulties for women in reconciling their perceived or assumed responsibilities as representatives on committees, particularly in the case of those who, like Susan Lawrence, were asked to put forward the views of 'labour'. Heseltine and Addison's earlier directives<sup>41</sup> stressed the need to appoint individuals, rather than representatives of interests or, more narrowly, delegates from particular groups. The appointment of the WAC was a departure from the assumptions behind those directives. The changed focus on representation was not only confined to women, however; pressure came from regional, national, and class interests, which had been forced into prominence during the war years,<sup>42</sup> although all of these had gender implications.

At its first meeting the Women's Advisory Committee spent a large amount of time discussing labour representation.<sup>43</sup> Although Susan Lawrence and Maud Pember Reeves [the two women who pressed the issue most forcefully] meant women representatives of labour, it is important to note the stress they placed on class as well as gender politics. Several of the WAC members doubted the value of all-women committees. Gertrude Tuckwell said that many of the subjects suggested for discussion clearly

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<sup>40</sup> See correspondence at PRO.RECO1.722/7890 and 725/11061, 11131.

<sup>41</sup> See p. 179. See also The *Times* report of the formation of the Women's Housing Committee: 'Although most of the members are connected with various departments and organizations they have been appointed in their individual capacity, not as representing any organization..' [4 March 1918].

<sup>42</sup> The Ministry seemed to have been particularly anxious to accommodate demands for more regional representation from Scotland. See PRO.RECO1/785/7489 for Scottish Parliamentary reform; and PRO.RECO1/780 for notes on the setting up of local Reconstruction Committees, including one from Davies who observed that they might '...have to consider an additional member for Scotland with a Scottish name', [19 July 1918]. The file also included a note that 'We are also told to have one or two other women and some Labour representatives.' [S.J. Hutchinson, 8 July 1918, PRO. RECO1/780.]

<sup>43</sup> That was also the main topic at the first meeting of Asquith's original Reconstruction Committee in March 1916.



also concerned men; for example, the issue of Mothers' Pensions 'was being put forward by men and materially affected their position', while Susan Lawrence felt that if new sub-committees were to be composed only of women their work would be largely wasted. Davies explained that they wanted to find the 'relative importance of different questions from the women's point of view ..' and suggested that he might arrange some joint meetings with the Section Chairmen.<sup>44</sup> Miss Tuckwell again insisted on the need for urgent attention to be paid to the question of Mothers' Pensions. Heseltine replied that the financial implications of such a scheme were under consideration by the Government Actuary, and that he thought that the Women's Committee might consider the general though not the financial aspects.<sup>45</sup>

The committee continued to discuss the matter at its subsequent meetings<sup>46</sup> and in early 1919 circulated one of the most cogently argued papers on the subject, written by Mrs Rosalind Vaughan Nash,<sup>47</sup> and set up a sub-committee in January 1919.<sup>48</sup> However, the issue then seems to have been dropped, thus bearing out the reservations of both Gertrude Tuckwell and Susan Lawrence about the value of women's committees, as in this case, like many others, the women had no means of influencing the financial decisions about the proposal, discussion of which took place elsewhere.

The WAC dealt with Mothers' Pensions within the broader context of the urgent problem of employment, or the perceived post-war lack of it, for women. It was one of the three major strategies for its alleviation that they discussed; the others being domestic service and emigration, both of which were considerably more popular with the Treasury than mothers' pensions for obvious financial reasons. At its meeting on 9 December 1918, the

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<sup>44</sup> Minutes of WAC, 21 Oct 1918, PRO.RECO1/750.

<sup>45</sup> That reflected the division of labour that has been noted, above, in education committees in which the topics for investigation by committees with women members were rarely those concerned with financial decisions. The point is also made by Hollis for local government as a whole: 'Women councillors joined the service committees, education, health, and housing in particular, while men continued to run the finance, works, contracts, and trading committees.' [1987: 421]

<sup>46</sup> Although without Miss Tuckwell who resigned from the committee at its first meeting, citing pressure of other work; she continued to be a member of Section V of the Council where she kept up the pressure for Mothers' Pensions.

<sup>47</sup> She was the wife of the Ministry's Secretary; see p.134. The significance of her paper in the history of campaigns for the endowment of motherhood has been examined by Susan Pedersen [1994]. See also Lewis [1980 (a)].

<sup>48</sup> Minutes of WAC, 6 Jan 1919, PRO.RECO1/751.

committee considered proposals from Lady Birchenough and Lady Caroline Grosvenor for sub-committees on emigration working in conjunction with the British Women's Emigration Association and the Colonial Office committee chaired by Lord Tennyson. Lady Grosvenor's suggestion was that members should include 'one or two of those who represent the working woman's point of view'.<sup>49</sup> The committee also considered a memorandum by Mrs Higgs on 'Training Schools for Emigration' which summed up the alarm felt by many at the

great problems that may arise out of disbanding of women munition workers and the disparity in numbers of the sexes. A stream of Emigration directed to our Colonies would provide the normal woman's life in the end for many.<sup>50</sup>

[Her emphasis]

She had collected all existing information about Emigration Societies for women and girls and concluded that with Government assistance they could meet the demand. She proposed the conversion of Munition Centres, and the internment camps on the Isle of Man as training schools for unemployed women workers.

Documents from the various committees concerned with emigration show clear differences in official attitudes between male and female emigration, although the spectre of the tramping soldier, accompanied by the unemployed and vagrant female munitions worker, was a powerful determinant in proposals that both sexes should be sent to repopulate the Empire. The Salvation Army had no qualms about the need for female emigration, particularly that of young widows and their children. General Bramwell Booth wrote that while 'the Motherland' might want to keep men and 'the Dominions' might not want male settlers, there could be no such doubts about women:

there can only be one voice in regard to the importance of a wise and generous treatment of the women of our people. It is vital to the well-being of the whole Empire that this question should be dealt with

<sup>49</sup> Letter to the WAC, 5 Dec 1918, PRO.RECO1/751. The 'working woman' increasingly entered such debates around this time, and was usually deemed to be embodied by Eleanor Barton, although Margaret Bondfield and Florence Harrison Bell were more frequently chosen to give the working woman's views on emigration.

<sup>50</sup> Maud Pember Reeves opposed such views, and 'strongly condemned the practice of putting forward the prospect of marriage as a means of inducing women to emigrate to countries where the conditions of life were intolerably hard'. [WAC minutes, 9 Dec 1918, PRO.RECO1/751.]

promptly and sagaciously.<sup>51</sup> [His emphasis]

The problem was seen as acute as women had outnumbered men in 1914 and the problem had been tragically exacerbated by war.<sup>52</sup>

Although women had for many years played a key role in setting up and promoting emigration societies,<sup>53</sup> the deliberations of the WAC had little, if any, impact on Government strategies. That was in part related to the hostility between the Ministry of Reconstruction and other Departments, which retained executive authority, while the Ministry continued to have only an advisory function, despite Addison's attempts to strengthen its role; but it was equally the result of women's marginalisation within the Ministry because of the autonomy they had been given within separate committees. Johnson [1968] describes the effects of inter-Departmental struggles for the work of the Ministry's various Sections,<sup>54</sup> but he does not address the double impact of such structural constraints for those committees that had a majority of women members, or were devoted to what were seen as women's issues.

On 16 December 1918 Mr W.C. Shortt<sup>55</sup> attended the WAC meeting to report that he had learned that:

..it was intended to push a Bill through as soon as possible providing for the co-ordination and control of the various associations and agencies at present concerned with emigration.. [thus] '..it would be hardly necessary for the question to be taken up by a woman's sub-

<sup>51</sup> Foreword to Booklet on emigration, n.d., PRO.RECO1/683/File 236.

<sup>52</sup> These imperial concerns are also evident in the records of the many societies which promoted and organised female emigration, and reflect the situation at the end of the Boer War, although in a reverse form. Then the aim was to increase the numbers of British settlers to South Africa in order to prevent Boer supremacy, and Milner produced detailed forecasts of the numbers needed to produce the correct balance between rural and urban areas. See Milner Mss.226: 11-17, unsigned memorandum, 27 Dec 1900; other relevant references in Milner's papers include Mss. 185: 179-80, C. Rhodes to Sir E. Grey, 25 Aug 1901; 205-09, Milner to Asquith, 13 Sept 1901; 283-86, Milner to J. Chamberlain, 7 Dec 1901 and Mss. 169: 50 'Memorandum of conversations with Lord Milner, May 31-June 2, 1901', printed by the Cabinet]. In 1901 emigration had been of some interest to members of the Concentration Camps Committee: Mrs Fawcett was asked by Frances Balfour to look out for suitable opportunities for women in South Africa [Fawcett Mss. 2C/73, 15 July 1901].

<sup>53</sup> Many of the women studied in the thesis had strong links with emigration societies, see, especially Meriel Talbot, Frances Balfour, Edith Lytton, Millicent Fawcett and Alice Knox. Women in the Labour party also supported female emigration: for example, Margaret Bondfield, Margaret MacDonald, Margaret Irwin and Florence Bell. The Fawcett Library holds an extensive collection of material on the subject, and the introduction to its collection gives a brief history of female emigration societies.

<sup>54</sup> Johnson [1968] chapters 13 and 14.

<sup>55</sup> A junior member of the Ministry's staff.

committee...<sup>56</sup>

At a subsequent meeting he reported that an executive committee of the Colonial Office Emigration Department had been announced, its one woman member still to be appointed.<sup>57</sup> Thus both for emigration and mothers' pensions the discussions of the WAC may have generated much information and a number of suggestions for future policy among the women concerned, but they were largely informing themselves, because of the place of their committees within the Ministry's committee system and the prejudice of other Departments against the Ministry itself.

#### 5b. The Women's Housing Sub-Committee

Housing had been identified by Nash as a key issue for reconstruction at the time of the first Asquith Reconstruction Committee;<sup>58</sup> it had been considered by various committees,<sup>59</sup> and by Panel 4 of the second Reconstruction Committee. The latter had Beatrice Webb as one of its members, but she did not interpret her role as dealing specifically with either women's issues or housing. One of her main objectives continued to be to overturn the Poor Law and to implement the Minority Report of the earlier Royal Commission, as part of a wider programme of socialist reform.<sup>60</sup> She was not alone in exploiting one aspect of public service in order to achieve reforms elsewhere; other groups were also aware of the possibilities offered by Reconstruction.<sup>61</sup> These groups were in contact with, and often had as members or former members, women who held civil

<sup>56</sup> WAC minutes, 16 Dec 1918, PRO.RECO1/751.

<sup>57</sup> WAC minutes 6 Jan 1919, PRO.RECO1/751.

<sup>58</sup> See PRO.RECO1/656, Nash note of 27 Dec 1916.

<sup>59</sup> Local Government, and Acquisition of Land.

<sup>60</sup> She had initially been enthusiastic about her appointment [see *Diaries*, 19 Feb 1917; Mackenzie 1984: 274-75], but was doubtful that the committee could succeed. When it was replaced by the Ministry of Reconstruction she continued to work on various of its committees, including that on Local Government, noting that she had 'piloted the Minority Report proposals through the Local Government committee' and that that was 'the crown of those three years' hard propaganda after the three years' hard grind on the Poor Law Commission'. [*Diaries*, 11 December 1917; Mackenzie 1984: 290-291.] She was referring to the work of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution, which she and Sidney had set up in 1909 [*Diaries*, III; Mackenzie 1984: xiii, 116-120, 133-40, 175-77].

<sup>61</sup> For example, the adult education and trades union movements, and, among women's associations, the NUWW. It had been aware of the possibilities for social and moral improvement that existed during and after the war, and most of the women on the various reconstruction committees were NUWW members.

service positions; for example. Constance Smith, Mona Wilson or Adelaide Anderson.<sup>62</sup>

Pat Thane [1993], in common with other historians,<sup>63</sup> has drawn attention to women's influence on housing policy, and although her essay is largely concerned with the impact of women activists in the Labour party, she makes several general points which are relevant here. She notes that women achieved their greatest institutional and political successes when they confined themselves to the 'caring sphere'. That self-limited role was further constrained by the refusal of both state and party structures to admit them to other areas of policy-making. Thane also notes the importance of voluntarism as an integral feature of state activity: it was 'not the fortuitous corollary of the limited state but integral to the conceptualisation of that state by its leaders'. [1993: 358-9] That statement is very clearly applicable to, and demonstrated by, the work of women on Government committees, and is especially important in an examination of the Reconstruction Committees in which there was a unique combination of official and non-official nominees, both in appointments to the various sub-committees and in their parallel institutional structures. However, although that permitted women's access to various committees, the overall structure of the Ministry militated against them, as has been noted above. Women's groups were firmly located in the voluntary sector and had no official route to Government influence, unlike men's professional associations whose members were increasingly being recruited to Government committees.<sup>64</sup> Women had to push harder for recognition, as had been the case since their initial attempts to be included on committees, but the nature of such attempts began to change as different groups argued for more specific political representation.

Many women continued to insist that they would be more effective in political work because they did not have strong party allegiances. Such views were shared by some suffrage campaigners, who believed that

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<sup>62</sup> All had been members of the National Union of Working Women/National Council of Women and were by the end of the war among the highest ranking women in the civil service: Mona Wilson held a rank equivalent to Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Reconstruction; Anderson was Chief Woman Factory Inspector. Smith had been appointed senior lady inspector of factories in 1913. See Tuckwell [1931: 30-32] for an account of her wartime work.

<sup>63</sup> For example, Johnson [1968] and Swenarton [1981] for the war-time period; and more generally, Brion and Tinker [1980]. See also Sanderson Furniss [1925] esp. p.19; and Sanderson Furniss and Phillips [1920].

<sup>64</sup> See Turner [1988: 214-16].

winning the vote was more important than involvement in party politics.

Many groups and individuals shared women's suffrage as an objective, but also wanted to maintain or develop their party political identities. This was probably truer for Labour women at that time; Susan Lawrence and others had questioned the means by which Labour was represented on the Women's Advisory Committee and there were similar demands from other political groupings for participation in the Housing Committee. Women had particular concerns about the franchise,<sup>65</sup> but were becoming aware of the need to represent political as well as gendered views. The Government's willingness to consider such views was linked to a more general sense that social and political changes were both needed and possible.<sup>66</sup>

In September 1917, the president of the Women's Municipal Party,<sup>67</sup> the Duchess of Marlborough, wrote to Nash asking that more women should be appointed to the Reconstruction Committee

with a view to giving representation to the great majority of professional, working and married women throughout the country whose opinions are not represented by the three women already appointed, all of whom represent the Fabian Group.<sup>68</sup>

The WMP was not party affiliated in theory; it had been founded to promote women's participation in local government, but there were clearly political issues involved as the Duchess's reference to representation indicates.

The Duchess stated that housing was an important part of the WMP's programme, and enclosed a list of its council members from whom she suggested the committee could choose women to serve on the Housing sub-committee. At the time of her letter the functions of the Reconstruction Committee were being transferred to the newly created Ministry of

<sup>65</sup> Although it should be recognised that this was not universal: for example, Beatrice Webb's long-term political aims may by this time have comprised female enfranchisement, but only as a feature of much wider social and political reforms. See her comments on the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1918; she recorded that she was 'wholly indifferent to my own political disfranchisement.' [*Diaries*, 16 June 1918; Mackenzie, 1984: 308-09.]

<sup>66</sup> That can be seen in the Government's statements about the establishment of the Ministry of Reconstruction, some of which are cited p.173; [see others in PRO.RECO1/776], and is elaborated in Johnson's discussion of the intellectual background to Reconstruction, [1968, chapter 10].

<sup>67</sup> Founded in 1913 'to put forward suitable women candidates for the various London Municipal Bodies, and to get them elected'. If elected the women were expected 'to accept and carry out the election policy .. [of the party], but on general matters .. will not be bound in any way, and can vote according to their individual political views.' [Taken from *Englishwoman's Year Book*, 1915: 161.]

<sup>68</sup> 29 Sept, 1917, PRO.RECO1/470.

Reconstruction as Nash informed her.<sup>69</sup> There was thus technically no committee on housing, and he told her that the Minister would welcome written submissions from the WMP. She sent him a list of nine women with public health diplomas and seven women architects, and suggested that

When Local Authorities are requested by the Minister of Reconstruction to make inquiries as to housing conditions and needs .... they should be instructed to consult women, including married working women, in all localities, especially in Urban and Rural Districts.

It has been brought to our notice that some of these latter bodies have dealt with the Local Government Board's scheme in a lamentably perfunctory manner, clearly proving that they do not realise the importance of the subject.<sup>70</sup>

The Association of Women House Property Managers also sought involvement: Miss M.C. Moor wrote to Nash on 17 Nov 1917<sup>71</sup> requesting a meeting with the Minister so that they could acquaint him with the aims and methods of their work. She was instead invited to call upon Maurice Bonham-Carter,<sup>72</sup> and his notes of their meeting register a number of reservations about the Association's usefulness in any involvement with interventionist housing programmes:

I find that they have not been employed by any local authority. They have in fact found difficulty in working with the L.C.C. as they did not consider that sufficient freedom or power was given to them. The result is that they are somewhat antagonistic to municipal enterprise in housing.<sup>73</sup>

Suspicion of such associations was not new: although the work of Octavia Hill was much admired, her antagonism to state controls had contributed to the long-standing difficulties in reconciling state and voluntary initiatives.<sup>74</sup>

There was also a degree of professional rivalry between men and women; the men appointed to specialist committees often equated all

<sup>69</sup> 11 Oct 1917, PRO.RECO1/470.

<sup>70</sup> 30 Oct 1917, PRO.RECO1/470.

<sup>71</sup> On 23 Aug 1917 she had written to Rowntree with the same request [PRO.RECO1/553].

<sup>72</sup> Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Reconstruction, dealing with housing matters; and Asquith's son-in-law.

<sup>73</sup> Bonham-Carter notes, 29/11/17, PRO.RECO1/474.

<sup>74</sup> For assessments of her work see Brion and Tucker [1980] esp. p.64-66; Lewis [1991(a)]. Gillian Darley [1990:281] noted that Miss Hill's 'opinions had been formed and set in the strict school of individualism and a distrust of State intervention in any form.'

women with charity workers in order to avoid giving recognition to professionally trained women. Sir Noel Kershaw and Mr Hare of the Architects' Committee rejected the suggestion<sup>75</sup> that women should be added to that committee, and proposed instead the formation of a women's advisory committee, which the Architect's Committee could consult. Mona Wilson and Bonham-Carter, reviewing proposals for women's representation on housing committees, felt that this would be a mistake and proposed instead

to have a small woman's committee .. who should be asked to advise on plans when received, and should also visit some of the typical permanent houses put up by the Ministry of Munitions in order that they may make practical suggestions. As the whole position develops they would be useful for other purposes, and our reference can be extended.<sup>76</sup>

They gave suggested terms of reference and proposed Lady Emmott and Mrs Barton, who were already on Panel IV, as the nucleus of the committee with a woman from C. Branch as Secretary;<sup>77</sup> Mrs Peel, Mrs Guy,<sup>78</sup> and Dr Lane-Claypon were also co-opted, and these proposals were agreed by the Minister on 1 February 1918. The representative base of the committee was widened by the addition of Mrs Sanderson Furniss, a qualified architect and already an adviser to the Architects' Committee and honorary secretary of the Housing Section of the Women's Labour League; Miss A. Churton of the Rural Housing and Sanitation Association; and Mrs Branford who had been nominated by the WMP.<sup>79</sup> Further members were added from the Women's Co-operative Guild: Mrs Rosalind Moore,<sup>80</sup> and Mrs Foulkes-Smith.<sup>81</sup> Lady Emmott subsequently suggested four more members: Mrs Ethel Alwyn Lloyd who had experience of Welsh housing matters; Miss Maud Jeffery, a member of the Association of Women House Property Managers and

<sup>75</sup> The suggestion was made by Mrs C.S. Peel of the Ministry of Food, Jan 1918 [PRO.RECO1/618].

<sup>76</sup> M. Wilson and M. Bonham-Carter to Mr Young, 31 Jan 1918, [PRO.RECO1/618].

<sup>77</sup> There were two secretaries: Miss A.K. Leach and Miss E.M. Waley.

<sup>78</sup> Gerda S. Guy, had been working at the Ministry of Munitions.

<sup>79</sup> Mrs Branford and Miss Churton were involved in the garden city and town planning movements, and had written extensively on those matters. For Mrs Branford, see her various contributions to the *Sociological Review*, and tributes to her in that journal [xix, (3), April, 1927].

<sup>80</sup> She was also a member of Willesden Urban Council.

<sup>81</sup> Mrs Smith was on the Board of Management of Edmonton Co-operative Society. Mona Wilson to Bonham-Carter 17 April 1918. [PRO.RECO1/627/7374.]



working in St Pancras; Mrs Jarrett, a member of the Women's Labour League who ran a co-operative store; and Lady Burton.<sup>82</sup> These nominations were approved with the exception of Lady Burton. Reiss objected to her appointment as a Welsh representative, because there were already two Welsh members and there had been criticism that the committee did not have enough working-class members.<sup>83</sup>

The lack of representation of national interests in the Ministry's committees, especially in housing, had been raised in a letter to Addison from Janet C. White, Secretary of the Edinburgh Women's Educational Union. She pointed out that

Written recommendations sent from Scotland to an English Committee are insufficient evidence of Scottish needs and desires. Also, any legislation, or any delay of Government action based on imperfect understanding of local circumstances, will aggravate, rather than alleviate the disorganisation of national life after the war.<sup>84</sup>

The EWEU wanted a special council for reconstruction in Scotland and a special housing committee - both to have equal numbers of men and women. The discreet reference to local circumstances was a reminder that large sections of the Scottish nation were less than supportive of the war effort, and this had encouraged a flurry of representative inclusions.<sup>85</sup> There was no separate committee for Scotland as part of the Ministry's advisory structure; there were regular consultations with Scottish MPs although, as Heseltine pointed out, these would hardly be satisfactory to the EWEU. On 24 July 1918, Addison attended a meeting with Scottish MPs who urged him to set up a housing construction committee for Scotland, but this was refused on the grounds that the Royal Commission on Housing in

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<sup>82</sup> Miss Leach to Heseltine and Davies, 5 July 1918 [PRO.RECO1/618].

<sup>83</sup> Reiss to Miss Leach, n.d. ? July 1918, PRO.RECO1/627/7374.

<sup>84</sup> Letter to Addison 21 June 1918, PRO.RECO1/514.

<sup>85</sup> This was in contrast to an earlier attempt to reorganise Government structures. E.S. Montagu concluded a memorandum on the Organisation of Government by acknowledging that he had said nothing about Scotland or Ireland: 'I do not know where to put them nor how to deal with them'. 30 April 1917, Passfield Papers, Vol. XIII (1), f.227-235.

Scotland had already made an exhaustive inquiry.<sup>86</sup> This group of MPs was subsequently known as the Scottish Parliamentary Reconstruction Committee. The secretariat at the Ministry of Reconstruction tried to cope with the Scottish problem by appointments to the Advisory Council: Davies asked Barter if Mr Adamson<sup>87</sup> had replied to the Minister's invitation for him to become vice-president of Section II of the Advisory Council: 'It will greatly simplify the position as regards Scotland and also as regards Labour if he can be induced to accept'.<sup>88</sup>

That left the situation for women unchanged, although the second of the EWEU's requests for a housing committee was partially granted. The Scottish Local Government Board set up a women's committee on 24 June 1918, chaired by Helen Kerr, the only woman member of the earlier Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland.<sup>89</sup> The committee followed the same working practices as its English counterpart and there was close liaison between them.

The two committees shared the disadvantages and advantages that arose from their all-women composition. Both groups used their knowledge of and contacts with other women's organisations to gather a mass of information from the women most concerned. The Women's Co-operative Guild was particularly effective, notably through the work of Eleanor Barton; she reported that the Guild planned to make housing the subject of their

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<sup>86</sup> The Commission had been appointed in 1912 and by 1915 had undertaken extensive research and was compiling its report. However, the members asked that their work should be suspended until after the war as they felt that their recommendations would go unnoticed if they were published during the war. There was considerable Treasury and Scottish Office pressure on the Commission to produce its report in 1915, but the members refused to do so and continued to work on it. They also came under pressure from a convention of Royal Burghs, members of which urged the Commission to produce an interim report in view of the 'serious situation .. rapidly developing in the large industrial centres..'. [6 May 1916: SRO.DD6/183] One of the delegates suggested that over the previous year the Royal Commission had become out of touch with public opinion [Baillie Agnew of Coatbridge, letter to the *Scotsman*, 29 June 1916: SRO.DD6/186]. The commission published its report in 1917; *PP*, 1917-18, xiv, Cd.8731, 8760..

<sup>87</sup> W. Adamson [1863-1936], a Scottish miners' official, MP for West Fife, 1910-31 and chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party 1917-21.

<sup>88</sup> 31/7/18, PRO.RECO1/785/7489. See also Davies' note cited above, about the appointment members with Scottish names.

<sup>89</sup> Other members of the Housing Committee were Miss C.M. Barbour, Mrs C. Blair, Mrs Ferguson, Mrs Annie C.L. Wilson [all of whom with Mrs Kerr were or had been members of the Edinburgh Social Union, a Housing charity set up in 1883-84 to work on the lines of Octavia Hill's organisation]; Mrs Mary Burns Laird, and Nurse J.P. Watt. The secretary was Miss E.M. McMichael of the Scottish LGB. For an account of the early work of the Edinburgh Social Union see Haldane [1896].

district meetings, and a number of conferences, meetings and exhibitions were held during the summer and autumn months.<sup>90</sup> Those meetings, and the publicity leaflets produced by the committee and distributed by the WCG,<sup>91</sup> unleashed a vast amount of correspondence from individuals and groups. Letters were critical of the shortcomings of housing, documenting the day to day practical difficulties for women, and made many suggestions for improvement. Only a proportion of the material has been retained, but it gives the impression of the release of longstanding anger about housing conditions through the dialogues set up by the initiatives of both committees.<sup>92</sup> That was reflected in their reports. The Scottish report contained an addendum signed by the majority of its members which stated that it was

imperative that the State should accept the principle that a proper standard of housing for the people is a national charge and a national concern.<sup>93</sup>

Both reports gave detailed recommendations for housing improvements and also noted the need for intervention to remedy environmental and health conditions.

The ability to work in a concerted way to collect and present women's views was a positive feature of the all-women committees.<sup>94</sup> Their negativity lay in their marginalisation which meant that they lacked power within an already weak Ministry. That was apparent in the resistance of the Architects' Committee to women members,<sup>95</sup> and in the later response to women's efforts to secure the right of women to be appointed to local authority housing committees.

The matter was discussed at several of the earliest meetings of the Women's Housing Committee;<sup>96</sup> on 22 May 1918 it passed a resolution that the Government should make it compulsory to have women 'representative

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<sup>90</sup> PRO.RECO1/627/7433

<sup>91</sup> These information sheets also contained questionnaires and were sanctioned by the Ministry of Reconstruction as a means of fact-gathering which cost the Government very little, as the distribution was undertaken by the WCG. [PRO.RECO1/627/7433]

<sup>92</sup> See PRO.RECO1/630/11187; /633/11512; and /626/6948.

<sup>93</sup> *NPP*, Local Government Board for Scotland, 1918. The report was signed on 3 Oct 1918. Copy in PRO.RECO1/629/9518.

<sup>94</sup> It also reflects the influence of Labour women's groups, as noted by Thane [1993].

<sup>95</sup> See above, p. 194.

<sup>96</sup> For example on 30 April 1918 and 13 May 1918.

of the class who are to inhabit the houses' on any public body or local authorities for housing.<sup>97</sup> The resolution was sent to the Minister with an accompanying letter from Lady Emmott who informed him that

We are most anxious that Government should make it compulsory to have women actually on the Housing Com<sup>tee</sup> of Local Authorities, as well as housing sub com'tees of women if they wish. Working class women are really indispensable.<sup>98</sup> [Her emphasis]

The proposal was discussed in a leisurely manner by Heseltine and Davies who agreed that it was a reasonable one, but probably a Departmental matter,<sup>99</sup> and referred to Capt. Reiss for an opinion on existing law and practice. He replied that there was

no legislation providing for women's representation on housing c'tees or for consultation with women's committees on the subject of municipal housing schemes. ... women can serve on local authorities if duly elected (or co-opted during the war) & as councillors they may be appointed to the Health & Housing Committees.

I think the resolution should be forwarded to the L.G.B. with a letter suggesting that if legislation on the matter is not practicable, the LGB might issue advice to local authorities to co-opt women onto their H[ea]lth & Housing Committees & to consult working women on the details of their schemes'.<sup>100</sup>

He referred Heseltine and Davies to Mr Hayes Fisher's reception of a deputation of women from the London Labour Party, reported in the *Municipal Journal*. Fisher had not been sympathetic; the women<sup>101</sup> had asked if he would set up a women's committee in the LGB, which he refused. He said that he was concerned to minimise conflict with local authorities and that women in local areas should put their views to their own authorities:

I do not think ladies who live in mansions are best able to say what is required in houses which are not mansions. [He would] see what I can do to persuade local authorities when they come to make arrangements for the design of the houses to consult in some way or other the opinion of the women who will live in the houses...<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> PRO.RECO1/625/6580.

<sup>98</sup> 24 May 1918, PRO.RECO1/625/6580.

<sup>99</sup> Addison passed Lady Emmott's letter to Davies on 1 June, who wrote to Heseltine on 7 June 1918. [PRO.RECO1/625/6580.]

<sup>100</sup> Reiss to Heseltine, 10 June 1918, PRO.RECO1/625/6580.

<sup>101</sup> They included Susan Lawrence and Eveline Lowe.

<sup>102</sup> *Municipal Journal*, 29 March 1918, p.345-6.

The work of the women's committees was valuable in itself as a record of contemporary housing conditions and as an example of the capacity of women to collect and organise the relevant information, but it was doubly sidelined: first, by comparison to the other Reconstruction Committees dealing with housing;<sup>103</sup> and, secondly, by the Ministry of Reconstruction's lack of influence within the Government, especially by comparison with the Local Government Board.<sup>104</sup> Johnson [1968:66-67] points out that the Salisbury Advisory Panel on Housing, in common with other Ministry of Reconstruction committees, had no direct links with Departments nor the full authority or backing of the Prime Minister. That was not necessarily an indication of hostility or even lack of interest towards reconstruction; simply that the various schemes had grown too numerous for either Departmental or Cabinet oversight.

The administrative divisions within the Ministry of Reconstruction meant that the Women's Housing Committee came under Section V of the Advisory Council, and officially reported only to the Minister; but the Ministry's other housing committees were much more inter-connected. Furthermore, the only woman member on any of the latter, Beatrice Webb,<sup>105</sup> was not involved with the women's committee structure and by the time the women's housing committees were appointed was preoccupied with the broader strategic aims of the Machinery of Government Committee. The women's committees were administratively and chronologically at the tail-end of a structure which Mrs Webb had criticised at its inception:<sup>106</sup> the various Reconstruction panels and committees were invariably blocked by other more powerful Departmental interests and initiatives, or were marginalised because they overlapped with existing inquiries.

The debate and planning for housing had produced conflict between the Local Government Board and the Ministry for Reconstruction within

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<sup>103</sup> Salisbury's Housing Advisory Panel; Hobhouse's Housing Financial Assistance Committee; the Hunter Committee on the Rent and Mortgage Act; the Carmichael Committee on Building Materials; and a variety of attendant sub-committees. [See *PP*. 1918: xiii, Cd.9231, App. 1.]

<sup>104</sup> See Swenarton [1981: 91-93, 97-98] for comparisons between the Women's Housing Committee and the LGB Committee chaired by Sir John Tudor Walters.

<sup>105</sup> A member of Salisbury's Housing Panel.

<sup>106</sup> Memo by B. Webb on Work of the Reconstruction Committee, 31 July 1917, Passfield Papers XIII (2), f.445-460.

which the women's committees were a very small factor. Indeed, attitudes were fixed and much of the initial wave of planning was over before the women's committees were even formed, as Johnson's account shows,<sup>107</sup> although various women's groups had been calling for housing reforms for many years,<sup>108</sup> and, as described earlier, had tried to gain representation on the relevant Government committees.

The work of the two women's housing committees had an impact in the formulation of the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919, despite the delays in issuing the reports. The interim report of the English women's housing committee was blocked by the LGB and only published in a modified form,<sup>109</sup> and Davies, possibly fearing further antagonism, seemed reluctant to publish the final report:

We published their earlier Report and I imagine that this one must also be published, but perhaps it should go to the Departments concerned in the first instance.<sup>110</sup>

There have been some recent attempts to re-evaluate the work of women in the development of housing programmes during the period.<sup>111</sup> However, Johnson, author of the major work on reconstruction, fails to mention their contribution, presenting the Act as the achievement of heroic reconstructing males:

of all the measures passed in 1919, this was what men meant when they spoke of a new and better England. ...Vaughan Nash's lone initiative of 1916, Salisbury's aggressive panel, Rowntree's sober and devastating memoranda, the work of Wallace and Reiss, and Addison's mingled diplomacy and outraged dissent.<sup>112</sup>

He goes on to list various professional and voluntary associations whose members contributed to the Act's provisions, but ignores the part played by

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<sup>107</sup> Johnson [1968], especially chapter 4.

<sup>108</sup> Such demands long predated the war; see various references to Octavia Hill's work and her evidence to committees; records of various women's housing associations, for example the Edinburgh Social Union; Cochrane [1908]. Campbell [1918] and Sanderson Furniss [1925] both acknowledge the research done by various women's groups before as well as during the war. An umbrella group for various women's associations, the Women's Housing Councils Federation, was set up in October 1917.

<sup>109</sup> See Swenarton [1981: 91-92];

<sup>110</sup> Davies to Nash, 30 Jan 1919, RECO1/629/10978.

<sup>111</sup> See, especially, Swenarton [1981] and Thane [1993], although the latter concentrates on the role of women working through the Labour party.

<sup>112</sup> Johnson [1968: 419].

women in persistently documenting the squalid conditions endured by so many people.

#### 6. Committees on Domestic Service

Anxiety about the lack of women entering, or staying in, domestic service was acute even before the end of the war,<sup>113</sup> and by its end centred around the problems caused by women's unemployment. The majority of women in paid work continued to be employed as servants, but the numbers had been reduced during the war by the need for women to work in industry, and many accounts testify to the willingness of women to abandon domestic service and their reluctance to return to it.<sup>114</sup> The perceived scale of the problem is demonstrated by the number of committees appointed to discuss it, and the composition of the committees makes it clear that women had been delegated to find the solution.

The Women's Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction treated the domestic service problem as an emergency measure and in November 1918 it set up four Domestic Service sub-committees,<sup>115</sup> to reform recruitment and training:

..to lift the work to the level of a recognised National Service ... to direct the supply to the lower middle class and workers' households...<sup>116</sup>

However, the WAC learned at its December meeting that a similar committee had been set up by the Ministry of Labour, and although Davies had been assured that the two would not overlap, Felicia Durham and Rose Squire, of the Ministry of Labour, [who had attended the meeting] were concerned that the existence of two committees would 'embarrass their departments', and it was agreed that the two Ministries should co-operate in the matter.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Appeals to women to volunteer for National Service were usually accompanied by the proviso that domestic servants need not apply. See, for example, *Daily Mail*, 9 Feb 1917, p.3.

<sup>114</sup> Dorothy Peel [1919] described watching a girl making lids for jam tins in 1917: 'The hours are long, the work is monotonous. Yet girls prefer to take up such work as this rather than to become domestic servants. Why? It is time that would-be employers of domestic labour found the answer to that question'. See also Braybon [1989: 49], Wollacott [1994:182-5].

<sup>115</sup> See appendix 2, p.358.

<sup>116</sup> WAC minutes, 18 Nov 1918, PRO.RECO1/751.

<sup>117</sup> WAC minutes, 16 Dec 1918, PRO.RECO1/751.

The WAC produced its report in March 1919;<sup>118</sup> it was not unanimous, and contained ten dissenting or qualifying memoranda, many of which reflected the different class backgrounds of the members.<sup>119</sup> One of the memoranda [not the result of class considerations] drew attention to the way in which the Ministry of Labour had curtailed the committee's terms of reference because of its own proposed committee, but had then failed to appoint one.<sup>120</sup> The report made a number of relatively progressive proposals to improve the conditions of domestic service, including the introduction of trades union organisation and a minimum wage scale, but like other elements of the work of the WAC discussed above, it was ignored. The Ministry of Reconstruction issued a less contentious version of the committee's recommendations, which denied the usefulness of trades unions for domestic workers and rejected the idea of fixed wage rates.<sup>121</sup>

The Ministry of Labour supported the more instrumental Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment. The original Central Committee on Women's Employment had been wound up after its report in 1916.<sup>122</sup> However, after an appeal by Mary Macarthur for the Government to pay some attention to women's unemployment, it was reconvened by Sir Robert Horne in January 1920 as a standing sub-committee of the Ministry of Labour<sup>123</sup> to organise training schemes and relief work for women

..whose earning capacities and opportunities have been injuriously affected as the result of conditions arising out of the war...<sup>124</sup>

The committee's report pointed out that domestic service should not be seen as women's natural occupation, even though three of the four schemes

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<sup>118</sup> *PP*, 1919, xxix, Cmd. 67.

<sup>119</sup> See Horn [1975: 167-8].

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum to the Report of Sub-Committee IV, signed by Lady Atkin, Mrs Harrison Bell, Dame Katherine Furse, Miss Brodie Hall, Mrs Jarrett, Dame Florence Leach, Lady Londonderry, Mrs Peel, Miss Stephen, Miss Tuke, and Miss Whyatt. [*PP*, 1919, xxix, Cmd. 67, p.31-32.]

<sup>121</sup> 'Domestic Service', No.22 in *Reconstruction Problems*, pp. 11, 14.

<sup>122</sup> *PP*, 1914-16, xxxvii, Cd.7848.

<sup>123</sup> The numbers of the original committee were increased and there were also separate committees for Scotland [chaired by Lady Aberdeen], North Ireland [chaired by Lady Londonderry] and South Ireland [chaired by the Countess of Fingall].

<sup>124</sup> Second Report of the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment to 31 December 1922: *Non-Parliamentary Papers*, 1923. [Ministry of Labour, Miscellaneous Reports 1918-35]. For a brief synopsis of the Report see *The Vote*, 7 Sept 1923, p.284.



that it administered were heavily biased towards domestic work;<sup>125</sup> the exception was the scholarships scheme, which trained women in non-industrial occupations. Many of the committee members might not have agreed that domestic work was necessarily the most suitable employment for working-class women although there was wide agreement that it provided a good preparation for married life,<sup>126</sup> but they tended to take a pragmatic view of the matter, while trying to ensure reasonable conditions for domestic workers.<sup>127</sup> However, whatever the views of the individual members, the committee was dependent on grants from the Ministry of Labour, which refused to support the scholarships scheme after March 1922,<sup>128</sup> and only funded the home crafts course after that time. The continued existence of the committee, and the involvement of women associated with philanthropic work in the provision of training for working women, acted as a persistent reminder that women's paid employment, [and its lack] was not a fully official state concern,<sup>129</sup> and further underlines the marginality of women's committees.

When they were laid off from their wartime work in factories, many women refused to take work as servants on the grounds that they were factory workers, and claimed unemployment benefit, for which they were censured by the press. As Gail Braybon has documented, the criticism

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<sup>125</sup> Nearly 10,000 women were given maintenance while they undertook training in home crafts on condition that they undertook to enter resident domestic service at the end of their course. Just under 4,000 women were given scholarships to train in non-industrial professions, although at the time of the report only 2,328 had completed their training - the majority in clerical work.

<sup>126</sup> See Thom [1982: 203] for a discussion of women activists' views on the suitability of domestic service, and Braybon [1989: 195-202] for an account of middle-class women who opposed such views. Furthermore, there was considerable support for mothers' pensions among many members of the committee, who, like Adelaide Anderson, [1917: 11] believed that their introduction would alleviate post-war unemployment problems.

<sup>127</sup> Jessie Stephen, one of the founders of the Domestic Workers Union in Glasgow in 1911, argued for minimum scales of pay for domestic servants and produced a scheme as an appendix to the Ministry of Reconstruction sub-committee on Domestic Service report, 1919, Cmd.67, xxix.

<sup>128</sup> By 1 Jan 1923, there had been 8,812 applicants for the scheme, of whom 4,111 had been accepted. 2,511 had completed their training and 1,567 had found work; 1,333 were still in training or were waiting to begin their courses. Figures taken from the committee's 2nd report, 1923, Ministry of Labour, *NPP*.

<sup>129</sup> In her discussion of TUC debates in 1915 about the return of male workers and the removal of women from their jobs, Thom [1982: 60] makes the analogous point that this 'separated women from workers ..[and].. demonstrated how hard organisations of women workers had to fight to be recognised as comrades of male workers and how paternalist even the motions, let alone the discussion could be at the TUC'.

began soon after the end of the war; she describes a range of press accounts, the cumulative effect of which had been to create the impression that domestic service was a normal and natural form of work for women, while factory work was aberrant.<sup>130</sup> Despite attempts by some writers and journalists to demythologise this view, the hostility towards women continued, and was manifested officially by withholding unemployment allowance if a woman refused to take work as a servant. A parliamentary exchange in December 1922 makes the position and its assumptions clear. Lt. Col. Nall asked if

able-bodied spinsters are allowed to draw unemployment benefit whilst vacancies in domestic service are available; and what steps are taken to prevent women and girls drawing benefit after refusing such a situation?

Sir A. Montague-Barlow<sup>131</sup> replied that

Benefit is only paid to women who are normally employed otherwise than in private domestic service. Further, such women who are suitable for, and refuse, domestic service are not granted benefit..<sup>132</sup>

The problem had become so intractable that a committee was being considered early in 1923, and Barlow's correspondence with John St Loe Strachey<sup>133</sup> reveals the strength of feeling on the subject, and some of the thinking behind the appointments, as well as being a more general example of the genesis of all such committees. It also puts the selection of the all-women committee on domestic service into a similar frame to that of its predecessors. The issue of male unemployment was urgent and serious in its potential social and political repercussions, and the period was notable for its attempts to define women's unemployment as a private matter and to reinforce the idea that women's wages were always supplementary to those of male heads of households.

One of the key issues for Governments was the cost of unemployment benefit, hence the move to restrict or avoid its payment to women on the

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<sup>130</sup> Braybon, [1989:179-204]. She also notes the complexity of Labour party policy on this issue. The party and many of its women activists condemned the refusal to pay benefit or fair wages to women, but were reluctant to argue that women should have an equal right to employment.

<sup>131</sup> Minister of Labour.

<sup>132</sup> *Hansard*, [159], 6 Dec 1922, 1744-5.

<sup>133</sup> Strachey [1860-1927], was editor and proprietor of the *Spectator* [1898-1925]. He supported Unionism and Free Trade.

grounds that they were all naturally capable of domestic work. The Central Committee for the Employment and Training of Women continued to play an important role in the removal of women's work from male preoccupations and in emphasising the separate nature of their concerns. As previously noted, its charitable antecedents were a further indication that the state need not be required to provide for unemployed women workers. It also focused the attention of middle class women activists on the immediate problems of working class women, which met the demands of those, like Katherine Furse and Violet Markham,<sup>134</sup> who argued that women should be organised by women, while also confining their activity to a quasi-philanthropic area. Even if individual women recognised the inequity of such a position, and many did, they took up such work for various practical and pragmatic reasons. There were clearly many hardships among working women which could be temporarily alleviated, while the underlying inequalities could [many believed] be tackled only by a gradual process of reform within which women's charitable or voluntary work helped to demonstrate their commitment to the responsibilities of citizenship.

The Committee on Domestic Service<sup>135</sup> appointed by the Ministry of Labour in 1923, and the last all-women committee of this period, further reinforced the practice of separate treatment of working women that was already institutionalised in the CCETW. It allowed the Government to distance themselves from the problem of women's unemployment by focusing attention on the importance of domestic service, and to exploit, [at least by default] the idea, put forward by a number of press accounts,<sup>136</sup> that selfish women were depriving returning heroes of their rightful employment by refusing to 'return' to domestic service. There was a severe shortage of servants, which was a cause of discomfort and annoyance to large numbers of middle class households; there were also increasing numbers of middle class [servant employing] women active in public life. Thus to consign the matter to women was a traditional division of labour: in private households women dealt with servants, and the committee reinforced the view that in public they were expected to maintain a domestic role.

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<sup>134</sup> Although they were primarily arguing this around the co-ordination of women's war work.

<sup>135</sup> Full title: 'Committee appointed to enquire into the present conditions as to the supply of female domestic servants'.

<sup>136</sup> See references in Braybon [1989].

Barlow had consulted Strachey [and others] about the formation of the committee and had observed that the members would have '..of course, to be of as representative a character as possible..'.<sup>137</sup> He subsequently sent details of the proposed membership which included

... two or three women associated with the Labour point of view like Miss Julia Varley, of a very good and reasonable type,

and asked Strachey for some more possible candidates '..preferably not ladies of title ..', but women

who could carry conviction in any findings they might arrive at, in the kind of middle class households I have referred to.. I do not think the Committee can do anything very startling, but I do think that by hearing and tabulating all the evidence they may do good work in helping to show us what the situation really is and where the difficulties, if .. any, really exist.<sup>138</sup>

He had originally wanted Lady Rhondda to chair the committee but had been advised that she was not a very good chairman, and both men agreed that Violet Markham would be an excellent choice. However, despite her keen interest in the domestic service problem,<sup>139</sup> she was already chairing the Central Committee on Women's Employment.<sup>140</sup> In the event Mrs E.M. Wood was chosen. She was a governor of the Regent Street Polytechnic, and a proponent of the view that domestic service was a skill for which training was needed.

Other members of the committee were also chosen for their connections with various relevant organisations. Mrs Bell was a leading member of the Labour party, serving as one of the obligatory four women members of its National Executive Committee; Mrs Wintringham was the second woman MP to take her seat, and the first to serve on an advisory committee while in office;<sup>141</sup> Lady Procter was the President of the YWCA and had been brought to Barlow's notice because of her letter to *The Times*, defending women who refused to be forced into domestic service; Julia

<sup>137</sup> Barlow to Strachey, 24 Feb 1923, Strachey Mss. S/19/5/6.

<sup>138</sup> n.d. March 1923, Strachey Mss. S/19/5/6..

<sup>139</sup> This was also a personal interest as, like many of her colleagues, she suffered from an inability to find and keep domestic help. See V. Markham to E.S. Haldane on 'odious servant worries..', cited in H. Jones [1994:17; and 109].

<sup>140</sup> Lady Crewe was officially the chairman, but was prevented by family commitments from doing much of the work after 1921. [See Markham Mss. 25/18 and 3/14.]

<sup>141</sup> After she lost her seat in 1924 she continued to be a popular choice as a committee member.

Varley had been involved in the foundation of the Domestic Servants Union.<sup>142</sup> Some had less tangible affiliations. Strachey offered his wife for membership as she had always been '...very keen about raising the status of domestic work...'. He went on to list her achievements and positions in the voluntary sector and concluded that he believed that the enhancement of the status of domestic service would '...confer an immense benefit on the women of England' and that it was the 'best possible training .. for the woman who becomes a wife and a mother and has to keep a house...'.<sup>143</sup> His offer was initially refused by Barlow, who explained that her appointment would mean '...the wives of 3 or 4 other London Editors would then have had to be considered...'.<sup>144</sup> However, the offer was presumably reconsidered, as on 20 April 1923 Strachey wrote to express his delight that she was to serve:

You will certainly not find her one of the tiresome over-officious people. She is distinctly a good woman of business and knows, not only her own limitations, but the limitations of committees.<sup>145</sup>

Parliamentary exchanges on the subject reveal a strong class polarisation with Labour members depicting domestic service as slavery, while Conservative members offered images of cosseted maids with gramophones and 'broadcasting sets' provided, and '...allowed to invite their friends one night a week...'.<sup>146</sup> Of the two women MPs,<sup>147</sup> only Lady Astor commented on the subject: first, to deny that women trained for domestic service would not take such employment and, secondly, to argue for continued support for the Central Committee on Women's Employment and Training. She questioned the need for the proposed committee, as she felt it

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<sup>142</sup> See Horn [1975: 158, and Tuckwell Papers; Microfilms [1981: Reel 12, File 609].

<sup>143</sup> 24 Feb 1923. Strachey Mss. S/19/5/6.

<sup>144</sup> Barlow to Strachey, March 1923, Strachey Mss.

<sup>145</sup> Strachey to Barlow 20 April 1923, Strachey Mss. The exchange is also of interest as it shows that at least some married women were either not asked directly to serve on committees, or that their husband's permission was sought before an invitation was issued. Two earlier instances were Lady Knox, whose husband was asked if he objected to her serving on the Ladies' Committee on Concentration Camps, [Information from Knox/Dundas family papers, provided by Mrs A. Dundas-Bekker.]; and Lucy Deane Streatfeild, whose husband was approached to check if her health would permit her to continue her committee service in 1913. [Sir Robert Morant to Col. Streatfeild, 3 Feb 1913, Streatfeild, Mss. 3/7(i).]

<sup>146</sup> Sir J. Norton-Griffiths, cited in *The Times*, 9 March 1923, 9e.

<sup>147</sup> Mrs Wintringham might have felt that she was debarred from speaking on the domestic service issue by her membership of the committee. The Barlow-Strachey correspondence indicates that she had been asked to serve in February 1923.

duplicated the work of the Central Committee on Women's Employment.<sup>148</sup> Her general views were shared by many women of different political allegiances: that domestic service was a skilled occupation for which training was needed and that women did not possess such skills as a biological inheritance. She did not address the related issue of women's need for employment that paid them an adequate wage. As Braybon [1989: 197-99] has observed in her discussion of the immediate post-war period, few women were willing to challenge the supremacy of the male breadwinner, with even Labour women invariably according greater importance to men's right to employment.

The status of the committee was underlined when Barlow announced its creation to the House of Commons on 21 March. His statement was greeted with an 'Oh' from Honourable Members according to *Hansard*, which unfortunately cannot record the tone of that utterance, but his response of 'Yes, it is a woman's question' suggests that it was not considered to be serious enough to warrant one of the more usual forms of inquiry. There is certainly a sense from the surrounding exchanges that the issue was being dismissed.<sup>149</sup> Barlow gave no answer to the Labour Members who asked, probably ironically, if he would extend the committee's terms of reference to cover the suitability of mistresses as well as of servants, and if he would include in the membership 'a father or two who have daughters who are servants?..'.<sup>150</sup>

There were calls for the abolition of the committee on the grounds of cost, as, like the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment, it was seen as an unnecessary indulgence. However, the committee carried out extensive research, as well as holding 12 public meetings to hear oral evidence from 73 witnesses of whom 55 were women. It investigated a large number of statements and complaints that had been published in the *Daily Mail*, the majority of which were found to be without foundation, and

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<sup>148</sup> 14 March 1923, *Hansard*, [161], 14 March 1923, 1531-32.

<sup>149</sup> Some of this flippancy is registered in other public discussion on the subject. *The Times* devoted only one editorial to the matter in 1923; that noted the discrimination against men, [my emphasis] embedded in the tax system which required employers of men as domestic servants to pay the Revenue an annual charge of 15/-. [27 Oct 1922, p.13d.]

<sup>150</sup> *Hansard*, [161], 21 March 1923, Col. 2545.

several of which were fictitious.<sup>151</sup>

The women involved with both the Central Committee and the Domestic Service Committee wanted to maintain and increase Government support for domestic training schemes, and it was that which received most attention in accounts of the report. The Committee on Domestic Service made a number of progressive recommendations about working conditions; the extension of the franchise to female domestic workers of statutory age on the same residence qualification as men; and, above all, on pensions and unemployment insurance, none of which were implemented. Its condemnation of the

tendency manifested in some quarters to consider that all women .. are potentially fitted for resident domestic service ..<sup>152</sup>

was widely approved by women's organisations,<sup>153</sup> but was qualified by the recommendation that domestic science instruction should be included on the elementary school curriculum for all girls aged between twelve and fourteen. That was part of an educational debate that had continued since the 1870s over the balance of academic and practical subjects in state schools.<sup>154</sup>

The progressive tone of the report was tempered throughout by the committee's conventional views about women, and many of its statements reflected, and projected on to working class women, the dilemmas faced by middle class women. They insisted that 'women should have as much freedom in their choice of profession as men..',<sup>155</sup> but equally that

Service is the highest privilege of life and it is surely difficult to overestimate the importance of service connected with the home life and homekeeping of the nation as a whole.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>151</sup> The results of these investigations were published as an appendix to their report. They had also invited the author of a series of articles in the *Daily Mail*, 'Scandals of the Dole', to give evidence, but were told by the editor that the gentleman would be unable to appear and that the paper would not submit information on which the articles were based. [Report of the Committee, Ministry of Labour, *NPP*, 1923.]

<sup>152</sup> Report, 1923, p.13.

<sup>153</sup> For example, see *Industrial and Labour Information*, Vol. 2, 1924, p.70; or the report of a meeting held by the Women's Freedom League, *The Vote*, 16 Nov 1923, p.365.


<sup>154</sup> This is detailed in Copelman [1996]; see especially, pp.113-18, and her discussion [p.211-12] of the 1870 Education Act as education for citizenship, and the translation of this into education for motherhood for girls. Many of her examples name women educationists and teachers who supported this view, a number of whom, for example Ida Cleghorn and Sarah Bannister, were frequently involved in advisory committees for the Board of Education.

<sup>155</sup> Report, 1923, p.27.

<sup>156</sup> Report, 1923, p.17.

## Conclusion

The 1923 Committee on Domestic Service was the last all-women inquiry to be appointed in a period<sup>157</sup> that was notable both for the appointment of such committees and for the increased participation of women in other Government committees. That was partly due to war-time needs: women became more involved in the work force, and Governments became more involved in regulating working and living conditions. At the same time, women's organisations achieved greater success in publicising the views of their members and in achieving representation on committees.<sup>158</sup> Such committee work was not direct substitution in the sense that women replaced men, but was an extension and expansion of women's pre-war committee participation.<sup>159</sup> The brief concentration of all-women committees during the later war years was much more likely to have been an administrative strategy to increase women's participation, [or one which increased the illusion of it] possibly induced by the fear of women's potential electoral influence.

Women achieved some gains through their committee work during these years; they became particularly skilled at mobilising support for single issues, primarily housing; and established strong connections between each other.<sup>160</sup> At least one committee effectively opened out a new area for women's public work. That was the committee set up in 1919 by the Lord Chancellor [Lord Birkenhead] to <sup>advise on the appointment of</sup>  the first women Justices of the Peace. He had decided that although

the Bench throughout the country was fully up to strength .. it is proper to signalise the passing of the Act<sup>161</sup> by placing upon the Commission of the Peace a limited number of representative women who have distinguished themselves in the public service, or by exceptional private gifts...

The committee was chaired by Lady Crewe and was made up of women

<sup>157</sup> I have been unable to trace committee membership up to the present, but according to the Ford listings there were no all-women committees between 1923 and 1950.

<sup>158</sup> Asquith's conversion to support for women's suffrage because he was impressed by the work of women during the War is usually assumed to apply to factory workers, but may well have been the effect of the large numbers of women who appeared on committees.

<sup>159</sup> Deborah Thom makes this point in her account of the dominance of a group of women who dominated post-war politics [1982: 145-46].

<sup>160</sup> See references in Thom [1982] n.159 above and also in Thom [1988:315].

<sup>161</sup> The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919.



chosen to represent Conservative, Liberal and Labour interests.<sup>162</sup> All were made Justices and were asked to draw up lists of suitable women from whom the Lord Chancellor would choose the final list. He suggested that women were particularly suitable for certain kinds of work:

For instance, in many large cities separate children's courts have been established. Women are specially qualified to contribute to the work of such courts,<sup>163</sup>

thus ensuring that they remained within the domestic areas already defined through their previous participation in public life. The work of the committee was unique and was not repeated; Gertrude Tuckwell noted that the Lord Chancellor had ruled that its terms of reference were not to be regarded as precedential and that after the first appointments of women magistrates the procedure would revert to normal.<sup>164</sup> Apart from that one case, the committee form itself meant that women were usually unable to translate what were often progressive recommendations into policy. That was not a problem only for women on committees, but was a general limitation of the form. However, unlike men, women lacked the extensive networks and support within the Houses of Parliament and the civil service that could directly influence policy.

For successive Governments and administrations women were both the problem and the solution; and the committee system expanded to provide part of the answer. The demands of women's groups were met by including one or two of their members on a relevant inquiry, particularly if it related to the educational or welfare issues that had been identified as matters that especially concerned women. Other inquiries, such as those examined above, could be defined and side-lined as uniquely relevant to women, reinforcing the separation of women into a separate interest group,

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<sup>162</sup> See appendix 2, p.360 for names, although Mary Ward did not serve, and according to Gertrude Tuckwell Beatrice Webb was only a nominal member. She had told Miss Tuckwell that she was very busy elsewhere: 'I told her that if she would serve I and Mary Macarthur would prepare the list, and she agreed to do so.' [Tuckwell, 1981, A/304.] The committee's report was published neither as a Command paper nor in the non Parliamentary series, and I have not been able to trace a copy. See also p.144, n.1.

<sup>163</sup> Confidential Memorandum from the Lord Chancellor to Lloyd George, n.d. Lloyd George Mss. F/4/7/43.

<sup>164</sup> The reversion to the usual methods of appointment after the first women JPs were appointed in 1920 meant that there was a drop in the quantity and [in some views] the quality of women magistrates. [See Tuckwell, *Reminiscences*, 1981: A303]

which was mainly seen as concerned with social reform. In that context, women's involvement in the Ministry of Reconstruction, and other Departments in which there were women's sections or committees during the war, was a temporary intensification of their pre-war committee participation. As the Ministry became absorbed by other Government Departments, and eventually disappeared,<sup>165</sup> and the women's sections in other Departments were closed down, so the participation of women in committees returned to its pre-war condition.

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<sup>165</sup> The work of the Ministry was combined with that of the Ministry of National Service in January 1919; both were brought under the Board of Trade between May and August 1919 and abolished in December 1919.

## Chapter 5

**'Women of Experience, Capacity, Quiet Judgement':<sup>1</sup> How women worked on committees**

This chapter explores some of the ways in which women worked as committee members to assess how they balanced their general responsibility to interpret the committee's terms of reference with their own and others' perceptions that they were appointed to represent women, women's views, or the concerns of women-and-children.<sup>2</sup> It is not an easy question to research, and few generalisations can be made from the accounts examined here. Despite the attempts at categorisation in accounts of the appointments of committees by the contemporary press, and by subsequent academic researchers, the terms of appointment for committee members did not include an instruction as to what interest they were to represent, even though the background papers of some committees indicate that there were attempts to balance various viewpoints. All members had an equal duty to consider the terms of reference under the direction of the chairman. However, it seems likely that the first women appointed to such committees were expected to assume some responsibility for reflecting the views of women, even if that was not explicitly stated.

Such an unspoken assumption would be entirely consonant with traditional committee practice: first, because members were often chosen to produce a given outcome, and secondly, because they were chosen from within a group of people who either knew each other, or knew enough about each other to have some idea of their possible views or ideas. It is within such networks of knowledge that much political activity took place and the mechanics were not stated because there was no perceived need to reveal them.<sup>3</sup>

The rules of committee behaviour were social constructs, like those that govern all other forms of human interaction, and, like them, were equally developed through precedent and analogy. Committee relationships were social long before the inclusion of women, and at one level their appointment merely involved an extension of existing practices. The women

<sup>1</sup> The quotation comes from Violet Markham writing to Laurie Brock [Secretary to the National Relief Fund] about the work of Soldiers and Sailors Families' Aid Committees. [24 Sept 1914, Markham Mss. 1/13.]

<sup>2</sup> Hyphenated because the concerns of women and children were often seen as identical.

<sup>3</sup> See Harris [1990: 65-6] quoted in chapter 1, p.27.

members of committees were mostly known to their colleagues, and could be reliably expected to observe the normal social proprieties, and not to use the committee form for the blatant promotion of women's rights. That did not mean that they ignored the subject, or were indifferent to it, however; their inclusion was the result both of women's demand for greater participation in public life, and of Governments' deflection attempts to respond. It was equally the case that only women with an acceptable public role were considered to have the necessary experience to serve on committees, and that they would have gained this experience from work connected with women's issues.

Any woman member of an inquiry had a difficult balance to achieve: her work dictated by first, the terms of reference of the inquiry and the chairman's interpretation of them; secondly, the relationship of her own expertise and experience to the inquiry and how she might use it to further particular causes she supported; and lastly, her own and others' perceptions of women's public work. The first two were equally valid for men, but the last gave an added difficulty for many women. They wanted to show themselves to be as capable as men in order to prove their fitness for electoral representation, while at the same time fulfilling the responsibility laid on them by the first two conditions above, and any wider need they may have felt to advance issues of equal rights for women. Many of them questioned, however politely, the foundations of the established social and political order, and that inevitably affected the ways in which they approached any involvement with Government policy-making, even if it had less impact on those who were appointing them.

By the early years of the twentieth century many elite men may not have accepted the inevitability of the franchise for women, but they could hardly ignore the fact that many of their female friends and relations were involved in the campaigns to achieve it. The civil servants and ministers who discussed appointments to committees would have probably known women suffragists, but they would not have known them because they were women suffragists. There were many other connections between them, both public and private, of shared social and political networks, and these provided other contexts for judgments about the suitability of particular women for inclusion on committees.

Although considerations of women's inequality [however it was manifested] might not have been of primary importance in men's perceptions of a woman's fitness for such appointments, it had a far greater effect on the women themselves.<sup>4</sup> Whether or not they felt a particular responsibility to introduce women's rights, they had to contend with the assumptions and expectations of their committee colleagues and their co-workers beyond the inquiry that they might or should do so. Such assumptions and expectations were as arbitrary as the criteria for committee appointments: a woman might be told explicitly that she was supposed to represent women's interests on one occasion, yet for another committee she might receive no such instruction, but would none the less be expected, or herself feel obliged, to do so. That speculative background must frame any consideration of women's potential to influence policy through such committees. In many cases they could do little more than raise questions.

I use a series of studies of individual Royal Commissions and one Departmental Committee to describe different aspects of women's involvement. I begin with the Royal Commission on Secondary Education because it was the first such committee to include women, and have used an analysis of the record of the evidence to the commission to try to estimate how far there was a gender divide in the way commissioners questioned witnesses; and whether the women members confined themselves to questions about girls' education. I have taken this as a model to examine two further Royal Commissions, on Divorce and the Civil Service, for which there are also additional means to assess women's ideas about their committee service, as in both cases one of their women members kept some written account of her work. I then discuss committees with only one woman member, and concentrate on a comparison between two educational inquiries, the Departmental Committee into Scottish Universities and the Royal Commission into the University of London; and an examination of the Royal Commission on Income Tax. Additional support for the patterns established in the earlier inquiries is provided by tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6, which analyse three 1920s Royal Commissions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hollis [1987: 471-73] points out how the ideology of separate spheres provided many women with a justification for their work on such bodies, as specifically related to female concerns.

<sup>5</sup> The background discussion to these inquiries has not been included because of space restrictions.

Most of the analyses begin with some background to the appointment of the inquiry. In the first three cases, I have concentrated on a relatively narrow analysis of the questions asked by men and women, comparing the numbers of interventions rather than the actual numbers of questions asked, which has enabled me to produce some rough estimates of participation rates between all committee members. I have also tried to indicate for each inquiry whether women members intervened more often when women witnesses were examined. I have not done this comprehensively in the committees with a single woman member for a variety of reasons; the Departmental Committee had only one woman witness, and the women members of the two Royal Commissions did not attend on some of the days when women witnesses were examined. In most cases I have included whatever information I have been able to uncover about the women members' views on the representation of women in public life, and have attempted to relate this to the positions they took on their respective committees.

#### 1. Inquiries with more than one woman member

##### **1[a] The Royal Commission on Secondary Education [1894-96]**

The background to the appointment of the Commission was discussed earlier,<sup>6</sup> and the particular areas of expertise of its women members have been noted there and in the appendix 1. The Commission examined 85 witnesses over 45 days; there were 11 women witnesses, nearly all of whom were teachers or teachers' representatives,<sup>7</sup> and likely to have been well known to Dr Bryant and Mrs Sidgwick. The questions or interventions have been recorded for each commissioner and the totals are shown below with the number of questions to women witnesses expressed as a percentage of the total. All the commissioners had one or more days of absence<sup>8</sup> and thus the average number of questions asked [or interventions made] is taken

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<sup>6</sup> See chapter 3, pp. 136-140.

<sup>7</sup> Miss Mary Gurney, member of the Council of the Girls' Public Day School Trust; Miss A.J. Cooper, Headmistress of Edgbaston High School for Girls; Miss Blackmore, Headmistress of Roan Girls School, Greenwich; Miss E.P. Hughes, Principal of Cambridge Training College for Women; Miss Dorothea Beale, Principal, Cheltenham Ladies' College; Miss S. Allen Olney, Private Schools Association; Miss Alice Woods, Principal, Maria Gray Training College; Miss Harriett M. Jones; Miss Elsie Day, both of the Association of Headmistresses; Miss Amy Lumby and Mrs Marion Withiel, both of the Association of Assistant Mistresses.

<sup>8</sup> Lady Frederick Cavendish was the most consistent attender with only one day's absence, while Sir John Hibbert attended least, turning up on only 21 days.

from the days on which they attended.<sup>9</sup> Full names and brief details of all the male commissioners listed here are given in appendix 3. The number of daily attendances for each commissioner is given in brackets after their name and the average number of questions is the daily average for those days on which the person attended.

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<sup>9</sup> Information from the reports of the RC on Secondary Education, 1895, xlv-xlix, C.7862-i-viii.

**Table 5.1****Analysis of questioning of witnesses by the Royal Commission  
on Secondary Education**

	Average no. of questions per day of attendance	Total no. of questions	Total no. of questions to women	Percentage of questions to women
Bryce [39]	11.1	432	27	6.3
Hibbert [21]	8.5	178	18	10.1
Lyttelton [35]	4.2	148	17	11.5
Roscoe [37]	7.7	284	39	13.7
Maclure [38]	12.2	465	50	10.8
Fairbairn [38]	5.6	212	19	9
Jebb [33]	1.2	39	5	12.8
Wormell [43]	3.4	146	11	7.5
Hobhouse [37]	6.1	224	5	2.2
Sadler [34]	3.5	120	9	7.5
Smith [38]	3.5	134	4	3
Cockburn [43]	6.8	294	19	6.5
Fenwick [29]	1.2	36	1	2.8
Yoxall [40]	4.5	182	17	9.3
<u>Cavendish</u> [44]	3.1	135	33	24.4
<u>Bryant</u> [32]	4.7	151	46	30.5
<u>Sidgwick</u> [35]	2.6	92	24	26.1

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Women's names are underlined in this and the other tables. in the chapter.



Taking the total and average numbers of questions asked by each individual, there would appear to be no marked discrepancies between the sexes. Committees might by prearrangement order the questioning so that all members had a chance to put questions, beginning with the chairman; and the sequence was generally according to the order of the names on the warrant of appointment. However, even if such a system had been agreed it could quickly break down in practice.<sup>10</sup> Bryce dominated the questioning during the first few days of the commission when examining the Charity Commissioners and Department of Education officials, but thereafter he was more restrained, and many of his interventions were the result of his role as chairman, as he introduced and concluded the sessions, and brought the other members or the witnesses back to the point.<sup>11</sup>

The total number of questions put by the women members falls within the range put by the majority of the commissioners, but when the questions to women witnesses are shown as a proportion of total questions the bias is clear; although women did not ask more questions of women overall, they concentrated their questioning to women far more than their male colleagues did. They were also much more likely to enter the questioning immediately after the chairman if the witness was a woman, although that may follow the practice of asking the members of the committee most associated with the area of expertise of the witness to speak first; for example, when the Bishop of London gave evidence, the first questioner after Bryce was the Dean of Manchester.<sup>12</sup> The procedure may also have been determined by notions of politeness, but if such social rules were being followed then the women members would always have been given the first opportunity to question all witnesses. That was clearly not the case, although in this commission and in other inquiries they often intervened sooner when there were women witnesses. Even though women

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<sup>10</sup> An anonymous article written in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1864 contained what was possibly still an accurate picture: 'It is difficult, without lending the page a suspicion of burlesque, to give a notion of the ridiculous fuss which is sometimes made in committee-rooms over a very simple point. People will not attend to what is said, but go on talking, three or four at a time, jumbling up totally distinct things in their haste, when, if they would open their ears, and understandings, and hold their tongues, they could hardly escape arriving at what they want.' [p.43.]

<sup>11</sup> In most commissions that I have studied, a pattern begins to emerge after a few days with some members consistently asking more questions than their colleagues. In this case, the most voluble member was E.C. Maclure, the Dean of Manchester.

<sup>12</sup> See note above.

commissioners did not exclusively question women witnesses, there was an isolating effect in that the more women were perceived to be speaking to, or through, women, the more it was possible to limit the areas with which they could concern themselves.

To a lesser extent that was confirmed by the content of the questions. All the women put questions about female education to both men and women witnesses. However, they also had other concerns upon which they had either chosen or been deputed to ask questions:<sup>13</sup> Lucy Cavendish concentrated on religious education;<sup>14</sup> Sophie Bryant on curriculum; and Eleanor Sidgwick on finance. The commissioner who invariably began with a question about girls' education was Sir John Hibbert;<sup>15</sup> the women were more likely to begin with a question on their particular topic than with a general comment on girls' education, although they might then incorporate this into the subsequent discussion. The relative number of questions and comments might also be affected by the questioner's intellectual grasp of the subject; and here, both Dr Bryant and Mrs Sidgwick might be compared with Hubert Llewellyn Smith and Michael Sadler. They did not ask large numbers of questions, but they made each one count. That is particularly evident in Mrs Sidgwick's questions on finance and scholarships, which she usually introduced with the tentative phrase 'It is not quite clear to me..'. This request for clarification would be followed by a pointed comment, which indicated that she had understood very well, but was either using the question to point out the shakiness of the evidence, or to allow the witness to reinforce it for the benefit of the other commissioners.<sup>16</sup>

Both she and Dr Bryant were concerned to draw out the institutionalisation of discrimination against women and girls in the financing, curriculum and administration of schools and colleges. Dr

<sup>13</sup> As this was also true of their colleagues, it seems likely that questioning on particular topics had been allocated to individual commissioners in advance; for example, Hobhouse often initiated questioning on local funding, Cockburn on School Boards, and Roscoe on technical education.

<sup>14</sup> Her insistence on the subject provoked Bruce [the commission's secretary] to observe that he hoped the Queen had 'indulged in one peep at [the Report] .. to see if a certain lady's high church proclivities were discernible' [W. Bruce to J. Bryce, 23 Aug 1895, Bryce Mss.161, f.176]

<sup>15</sup> This was usually to clarify from the witness whether the information they had provided, or were about to give, related to boys only or to girls and boys.

<sup>16</sup> For an example of the first, see her questioning of Mr Pinches and Mr Hodgson of the College of Preceptors on Day 15; and for the second that of Miss Jones and Miss Day on Day 31.

Bryant's questioning on these points frequently demonstrates the persistence with which she pursued such topics; for example, in the examination of D. Forsyth and J. Bidgood.<sup>17</sup> Bryce had established early in the questioning that the witnesses did not consider that girls should have the same curriculum as boys; they had stated that girls should be taught less science and more domestic and literary subjects. There followed a series of lengthy and discursive questions and answers on other topics before Dr Bryant brought the questioning back to their views on the relative intellectuality of girls and boys.<sup>18</sup> She was supported by Mrs Sidgwick, who also held strong views on the subject of scientific education for girls,<sup>19</sup> with the result that the examination of the witnesses could not be completed in that session and they were asked to return on the following day.

A final example demonstrates women's awareness of the ways in which their presence on committees could be exploited [in both a positive and a negative sense]. During the examination of Sidney Webb and Dr W. Garnett of the London School Board, there was a discussion of the possibility of creating Secondary Education Boards and how their personnel should be chosen between elected members of existing councils and outside experts. Dr Fairbairn suggested that there should be representatives of classes of institutions and persons, especially of teachers, to which the witness agreed [Dr Garnett was speaking at this point], and Mr Fenwick and Hubert Llewellyn Smith directed the questioning more specifically to the practices of the London County Council in relation to the newly created Technical Education Board. Mr Webb explained that the Council's policy was to ask for nominations from organisations rather than to co-opt named individuals, although they retained the power to reject the person chosen by an organisation. Mrs Sidgwick then made her only contribution during the session, moving the discussion even further towards the particular with the question 'Was there any special reason for omitting

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<sup>17</sup> Representatives of the National Association of Headmasters of Higher Grade and Organised Science.

<sup>18</sup> She was often concerned to have witnesses commit themselves on this point; see also the examination of Edward Hance, clerk to the Liverpool School Board, Day 33.

<sup>19</sup> She frequently referred to the importance of scientific education for girls in her many speeches and conference papers; see, for example her paper on Women's Colleges given to the Birmingham Teachers' Association 5 Oct 1886 [Sidgwick Papers, Newnham College, Box 5]; and her speech at the opening of King Edward's School, Birmingham, 26 Nov 1896 [Ibid. Box 1].

the Association of Headmistresses from the bodies represented?' Mr Webb replied:

I think perhaps the council thought that places for two representative teachers were as many as, having regard to other bodies, it could spare. The question did not acutely arise, because we had the advantage, from the beginning, of the presence of Mrs Bryant as a member of the board.

Mrs Bryant said:

That was adopting the principle of selection rather than election, as I was a co-opted member. It will be in Mr Webb's memory that I objected very strongly to the view that my appointment made a representative from the headmistresses unnecessary?

Sadler then continued the discussion on the nature of representation on local authorities.

There is no evidence to show that this trap was planned, and in any case there could have been no guarantee that the witness would fall into it quite as conveniently as he did, but each of the two women invariably took advantage of openings provided by the other, and often of those provided by other members of the commission. They had of course been acquaintances and colleagues for many years, and shared an interest in mathematics as well as their commitment to improved education for girls and women. They had been involved in a number of other projects so were aware of each others' views and committee behaviour. That meant that even if they did not deliberately prepare their interventions, they were likely to have had an awareness of the objects the other might pursue. Such patterns of coalition were not confined to Dr Bryant and Mrs Sidgwick. Dr Bryant and Michael Sadler had worked together on the Technical Education Board and in the campaigns for secondary education reform that preceded the commission. They produced several joint contributions to the report, at one point planning to issue a Minority Report,<sup>20</sup> and it seems equally likely that they collaborated during the earlier sittings.

No Government committee offers a typical pattern of procedures and alliances, and the Royal Commission on Secondary Education had been deliberately chosen to have more connections between its members than might be found between others of a similar size. The strategies adopted by

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<sup>20</sup> See S. Bryant to Bryce, 12 June 1895, Sadler to Bryce, 3 Aug 1895; [Bryce Mss. 161].

its members suggest that while there were some demarcations around gender, these did not have the effect of marginalising the women members, insofar as that can be judged from their rate of participation in the questioning. The women members did question or intervene more readily when examining women witnesses, which might have been because they knew many of them well and had possibly engineered their appearance before the commission,<sup>21</sup> or because the commissioners had predetermined this strategy. The concentration of their questions highlighted many of the issues concerning the education of girls, and women's position in the education profession, and was clearly a positive outcome. However, it might also have tended to reinforce the idea of women's separate interests; and that could have negative effects, as demonstrated in chapter 4. There seems to have been a high degree of collaboration between the members of this commission because of their overall commitment to educational reform, however much they might have differed about the means. For the women involved there was additionally a form of solidarity because there were three of them, which, with their established social and family connections, might have given them the confidence to focus more directly on issues that concerned women.

#### **1[b]. The Royal Commission on Divorce [1909-12]**

The evidence of women to this commission has been cited by historians to illustrate aspects of feminist and socialist arguments on the the reform of the divorce laws, particularly in connection with the views of working women on the subject,<sup>22</sup> but the role of the commission's two women members has not been assessed and is rarely referred to. Banks' [1990(b): 196-7] account of the background to women's participation in this commission downplays the role of both feminists and socialists, arguing that 'the feminists were fully occupied at that time with the fight for the vote..', although she notes that Millicent Fawcett gave evidence. However, one of the two women

<sup>21</sup> They may also have influenced the choice of the women assistant commissioners. The Education Commission employed 14 assistant commissioners, of whom five were women; this was a slightly more favourable ratio than the previous commission to do so [the RC on Labour where four of the 17 were women; see chapter 3], and almost unique during the period I have studied. The only other commission to employ substantial numbers of women in a similar position was the RC on Indian Labour [1929-31] which appointed one female assistant commissioner and 19 'Lady Assessors'.

<sup>22</sup> See Banks [1990(b)]; Minor [1979]; Thane [1993].

commissioners [Lady Frances Balfour] managed to combine a strenuous programme of suffrage work with an active commitment to divorce reform. The other, May Tennant, was apparently less interested in the work of the commission,<sup>23</sup> but in its initial stages was involved with Lady Frances in ensuring that the representation of women's views was as wide as possible.

The commission was the first inquiry into legal changes to which women had made any direct contribution as members.<sup>24</sup> In general women were not involved in such inquiries and their expertise in legal matters was ignored, despite the growing number of women who had studied law;<sup>25</sup> of the 28 Royal Commissions or other *ad hoc* committees listed by the Fords [1957] under the category 'Legal Administration, Police and Law' between 1900 and 1916, women were members of only the Royal Commission on Divorce, and three inquiries into prison conditions.<sup>26</sup> During the period 1917-30 the numbers rose slightly; women were members of 14 inquiries of the 53 in the same category.<sup>27</sup> In other cases, the terms of reference could ensure that they were subtly but deliberately excluded; and they were rarely called as witnesses unless women were members of the inquiry.<sup>28</sup> For example, the Royal Commission into Electoral Systems [1908-10] was to examine proposed reforms 'in regard to the existing electorate'. Its report claimed that

..the number of "parties" represented, directly or indirectly [their

<sup>23</sup> Her biographer recorded that 'neither the subject nor the work was really congenial to her', and that she felt that the three years were 'largely wasted in discussions and antagonisms that were irreconcilable'. [Markham, 1949: 42-43]

<sup>24</sup> The terms of reference of the Royal Commissions into the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded [1904-08], and into the Poor Laws [1905-09] [both of which included women] were that they should advise on changes in the law, but they were set up primarily to inquire into social conditions rather than the legal implications of changes in those conditions.

<sup>25</sup> There was immense resistance to women entering the legal profession; towards the end of the nineteenth century they were employed as legal assistants but were unable to practice as solicitors or barristers until 1922. There are very few accounts of this history, and I have been unable to trace any detailed work on women as practitioners of law in Britain which deal with the period before the 1920s. There are references in Sachs and Wilson [1978] (the most comprehensive account); Birks [1960: 270-278]; Lawson [1968: 133-34]; Abel [1988: 79-80]. For an account of historical, legal debates on the classification of women in English common law see Goodrich [1993].

<sup>26</sup> Departmental Committees into Prison Libraries [1910]; Reformatory and Industrial Schools [1911-13]; Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Scotland [1914-15].

<sup>27</sup> See Ford and Ford [1951].

<sup>28</sup> That was manifestly the case during the nineteenth century when major structural changes in the legal system were debated and implemented, and further calls into question claims that universal democratic citizenship was underpinned by such reforms. See Marshall [1964]; and for one critique, Pateman [1988].

emphasis] in the House of Commons is incalculable. The interests of labour, of agriculture, of temperance, of Roman Catholicism - to cite a few typical examples, never fail of their spokesmen. Even generally hostile witnesses were apparently unable to name any considerable "minority" in this sense, which is at present absolutely deprived of representation.<sup>29</sup>

Some of the most 'hostile witnesses' were not called:<sup>30</sup> there were no women witnesses and no mention of women anywhere in their report.

The terms of reference for the Royal Commission on the Selection of Justices of the Peace [1909-10] included the provision that the commission should advise on 'the selection of the most suitable persons ... irrespective of creed and political opinion...'.<sup>31</sup> That did not seem to explicitly exclude women, but attempts to raise questions about their appointment as magistrates were blocked. Arthur Henderson<sup>32</sup> asked two such questions; the first to the Earl of Dartmouth who merely replied that a lady would not be suitable for appointment and refused to give reasons. When Henderson put the same question to Lord Halsbury, he was interrupted by the chairman, Lord James, who said that this was not in the commission's reference. None the less Henderson persisted and his question was allowed. Halsbury's reply showed the extent of the demarcation of women in public life; he said that he had no objection to the appointment of women, but did not think it correct to appoint a person who was only qualified to adjudicate in certain cases.<sup>33</sup> The certain cases were not listed, but can be assumed to be only those involving women and children. Halsbury's remark showed women's success [or failure] in defining their public interests around the domestic. Their capabilities and even rights to represent their own sex were accepted in theory, if less rarely in practice, as is shown in the example above of the limits to such representation in the committee form;<sup>34</sup> but that

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<sup>29</sup> Report of the RC, 1910, xxvi, Cd.5163, p.11.

<sup>30</sup> Some of whom might well have been chained to the railings outside the committee room, or otherwise attempting to disrupt political life, as the commission took place during the period when militant suffrage activity was most intense.

<sup>31</sup> Warrant of appointment in 1910, xxxvii, Cd.5250.

<sup>32</sup> Labour MP, first entered Parliament in 1903.

<sup>33</sup> RC Evidence, 1910, xxxvii, Cd.5358, paragraphs. 1196-1200.

<sup>34</sup> Other examples can be seen in accounts of women's work as members of School Boards, or local Councils; or as Prison Visitors or Poor Law Guardians, see Hollis [1987]. Furthermore, women encountered prejudice when they entered professions previously closed to them, see for example Anne Witz's discussion of 'closure concepts'. [1992, chapter 3.]

definition could then be used powerfully to exclude them. Such exclusions persisted: when the appointment of women to the bench was discussed in 1919, it was noted that they were 'specially qualified to contribute to the work of ... [children's courts] ...'.<sup>35</sup>

It could be argued that the nature of many inquiries precluded the need to appoint either men or women as experts, as part of their aim was to mediate between the governed and the governors, the ordinary person and the specialist.<sup>36</sup> However, that still left women at a huge comparative disadvantage, which compounded the obvious numerical one, since the absence of any woman with professional knowledge, particularly in financial or legal matters, could be justified on the grounds that women were being appointed for their knowledge of women's lives, or as representatives of the views of working women. Yet any inquiry would always include men with particular certificated, licensed, or consecrated forms of expertise, as well as others who could represent a popular or generalist view. Thus of the 13 members of the Royal Commission on Divorce, seven were barristers, five of whom were senior judges or law officials; of the remainder, Sir George White<sup>37</sup> and Thomas Burt were Members of Parliament; the Earl of Derby had held a number of ministerial offices; and J.A. Spender was the Balliol-educated editor of the *Westminster Gazette*.

The two women members were articulate and intelligent, and they even had some legal knowledge, although not in the area of divorce or family law,<sup>38</sup> but their appointment to the commission was to speak for and as women. The *Daily Express* noted that Lord Gorell had 'unrivalled knowledge of the practice in the Divorce Court', the Archbishop of York

stands for the Church of England, Sir George White for Non-conformity, and Mr Thomas Burt for the working classes, who are the greatest sufferers from existing conditions. Lady Frances Balfour and

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<sup>35</sup> Undated memo to Lloyd George from the Lord Chancellor [Lord Birkenhead]. [Lloyd George Mss. F/4/7/43]. See also chapter 4, above, pp. 210-11.

<sup>36</sup> A discussion of such arguments is in chapter 1, pp. 35-37.

<sup>37</sup> Sir George was also a former President of the Baptist Union, from which presumably he drew his authority to represent non-conformity.

<sup>38</sup> Frances Balfour was a self-taught expert in political procedure and some constitutional matters. She noted that she had been able to advise Arthur Balfour on a number of constitutional points concerned with parliamentary procedure on the death of a sovereign [Edward VII died in May 1910], which she had learnt in conversation with Sir W. Anson. [Letter to Lady Betty Balfour, 23 May 1910, Balfour Mss. GD433/2/340.] May Tennant's expertise was in employment legislation.



Mrs Tennant represent women...<sup>39</sup>

For the *Morning Post*

Every member .. brings some special contribution of ability and experience. The woman's point of view is ably represented by Lady Frances Balfour and by Mrs H.J. Tennant, who has a very special and intimate knowledge of the needs of the poor and can speak with an almost unique authority on the question of women ...<sup>40</sup>

That is not to deny that they were effective participants, nor that women's views were poorly represented, but to emphasise that since the form and nature of the inquiry was doubly determined by the dominance of legal practitioners and the usual committee practices, the women members had a difficult task.<sup>41</sup> As table 5.2 shows, there was no equity in terms of their interventions, and a reading of the evidence shows it to have been dominated by the legal and doctrinal arguments between certain members,<sup>42</sup> and between members and witnesses, in which the lay members of the commission did not participate. Mrs Tennant contributed more to the discussion when she was there, but she did not attend regularly. Lady Frances missed only a few meetings, but spoke rarely.<sup>43</sup>

The commission heard evidence from a number of women both in an individual capacity and as representatives of organisations. Much of this was due to the contacts and networking skills of the two women members. They had been asked at the first meeting of the commission to nominate women witnesses

.. who wd give evidence on the condition of the poor under the law as

<sup>39</sup> *Daily Express*, 29 Oct 1909, p.1.

<sup>40</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 Oct 1909, p.6. There were no similar public statements regarding Lady Frances, although the *Manchester Guardian* mentioned her suffrage work. One determinant of her appointment was probably her relationship with the Royal family, and the need to placate the King. She noted in her autobiography that the King had objected to women serving on the commission as divorce was 'not a subject where women's opinions could be conveniently expressed'. [1930: Vol. 2, p.423.]

<sup>41</sup> It could also be true for non-elite men: despite his long parliamentary experience Thomas Burt made fewer interventions than Mrs Tennant, and the commission heard no evidence from any association that could be described as representative of working-class men. That must qualify Minor's claim that he 'could be relied upon to see that at least the views of organised working people would be fairly represented among the witnesses'. [1979: 107]

<sup>42</sup> See particularly the exchanges between Lord Gorell and Sir Lewis Dibdin [an authority on Canon law and ecclesiastical history, and described by Frances Balfour as the 'most fossilized of all the Commissioners', (letter to M. Fawcett, 26 May 1910, Fawcett Mss. 1H1/39)].

<sup>43</sup> It is unclear whether this was from lack of interest or lack of confidence; she noted on one occasion that 'I rather weakly let "the Church" .. take my turn away..' of cross-examining Cecil Chapman, a witness proposed by Mrs Fawcett. [Letter to Mrs Fawcett, 26 May 1910, Fawcett Mss. 1H1/39.]

it now stands, both with regard to separation orders, & divorces, also where the law presses hardly on women. Mrs Tennant & I consulted..<sup>44</sup>

According to Lady Frances' diary, she and Mrs Tennant met frequently during the early stages of the commission, and resumed their meetings in 1912 when the report was being prepared. Lady Frances also kept up social contacts with other members of the commission, in particular Lord Guthrie and J.A. Spender.<sup>45</sup>

Lady Frances noted that she had suggested Mrs Fawcett, Mrs Barnett and Mrs Bramwell Booth as witnesses, while Mrs Tennant had named a doctor.<sup>46</sup> Mrs Fawcett replied that she did not think her knowledge 'sufficiently exact and up to date' for her to be a witness, although she did give evidence; and gave four nominations for witnesses, three of whom appeared before the commission.<sup>47</sup> From references in the published evidence of the commission and in Lady Frances' voluminous correspondence, it is clear that their efforts in publicising the work of the commission among women's associations were at least as important as individual approaches from such associations. Both women had contacts with Women's Liberal Associations, the National Union of Working Women, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Women's Labour League and the Women's Industrial Council. Frances Balfour had attended a meeting of the Women's Labour League [at Margaret MacDonald's house] and other women's organisations at which the views of working women on divorce

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<sup>44</sup> Frances Balfour to Millicent Fawcett, 16 Dec 1909, Fawcett Mss., 1/G/36.

<sup>45</sup> Her diary has a number of references to her meetings with May Tennant, usually after sittings of the commission; the meetings with Spender are more frequent in 1911-12 when the commission was discussing its report. Her friendship with Spender pre-dated the commission, see their correspondence in BL. Add. Mss. 46391. She also had meetings with other RC colleagues, particularly Lord Guthrie, a fellow Scot. [See *Diary*, Balfour Mss. GD433/2/423, 424, 425 and 426.]

<sup>46</sup> Five female doctors gave evidence: Ethel Bentham, Frances Ivens, May Thorne, Jane Walker, and Helen Webb.

<sup>47</sup> Cecil Chapman, Miss Elizabeth Lidgett, and Miss Leppington; Mrs Fawcett's fourth suggestion was Mrs W.A. Coote of the Vigilance Association. [Mrs Fawcett to F. Balfour, 18 Dec 1909, Fawcett Mss. 1/G/36.]

were discussed.<sup>48</sup> This meeting was referred to during the commission's examination of Dr Ethel Bentham<sup>49</sup> and Lord Gorell asked her how far the women there truly represented the feelings of working women. She replied that they were

representative chiefly of the better artisan class and some middle class .... Mrs Ramsay MacDonald is a member; so am I. There are women who are absolutely working women....<sup>50</sup>

That supports Iris Minor's argument<sup>51</sup> about the ways in which middle class women represented working women to the commission, and the more general points made earlier in the chapter about the nature of women's evidence to all such inquiries.

Both Lady Frances and Mrs Tennant were determined to point out the injustices of the existing system, although they did so from different perspectives. Mrs Tennant displayed a tenacity and confidence in questioning the judicial witnesses that reflected her earlier experience as a factory inspector, when she had mounted her own prosecutions in magistrates' courts. Her questions were about specific aspects of the prevailing law and practice, mainly as it affected poorer women; for example, many of her questions were designed to draw out the problems that such women faced in obtaining payments from absent husbands.<sup>52</sup> She sustained her examination in a way that was generally uncharacteristic of women on such committees. Usually they asked one question, received an answer, and the questioning passed to someone else.<sup>53</sup> Her tenacity was especially remarkable in the early stages of the Royal Commission when legal authorities were being examined, several of whom were themselves hard put to make their points over the constant interruptions of

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<sup>48</sup> Margaret MacDonald was to have represented the Women's Industrial Council at the commission, but, following her resignation from its executive, her place was taken by Ruth Homan. Frances Balfour mentioned this in her letter thanking Mrs MacDonald for holding the meeting, saying that the work of the commission was not agreeable, and that she had 'benefited a great deal fr. that talk in yr. rooms..'. [21 Aug 1910, MacDonald Mss. PRO.30/69/1377.]

<sup>49</sup> Dr Bentham represented the Fabian Women's Group and had also been at the meeting.

<sup>50</sup> RC Evidence, 1912-13, xx, Cd.6481, 37: 34783-4.

<sup>51</sup> Although she does not refer to this passage of evidence in her chapter.

<sup>52</sup> RC Evidence, 1912-13, xviii, Cd.6479: for example, evidence given by Sir John MacDonnell and Sir Bargrave Deane at 27: 424-27 and 31:561-64, and 59-60: 1076-1121, respectively.

<sup>53</sup> This pattern is typical of many of the committees analysed for the thesis.

the judges on the commission who spent as much time picking over points of law among themselves as they did listening to the witnesses before them.<sup>54</sup>

During the first three days of evidence Lady Frances intervened only once to introduce some discussion of the sexual double standard and the need to treat men and women equally in divorce cases. She questioned Sir John Bigham about his use of the term 'wise woman', which led him to express his view that women were different from men in their capacity to resist temptation.<sup>55</sup> That was to become typical of her questioning; Mrs Tennant spoke on the specifics, but Lady Frances was concerned to point out the roots of prejudice, whether in an individual's own beliefs, as in the case above, or in institutional forms. She wrote to her son that in one session Lord Gorell had told them that Norway had just reformed its divorce laws: '...I tried to bring out Why. Because the Suffrage had been granted to women...'.<sup>56</sup>

Neither Lady Frances nor Mrs Tennant were as liberal in their views about marriage and divorce as some of the women who gave evidence to the commission, in particular Eleanor Barton, speaking on behalf of the Women's Co-operative Guild. She was condemned by the writers of the commission's minority report as advocating '...a facility of divorce hitherto unheard of in any civilised country...'.<sup>57</sup> Mrs Tennant was herself concerned that easier divorce would lead to a lowering of the moral standards of the working classes, although she did not believe that the existing system, which relied mainly on separation orders, served poorer people well. She signed a note of dissent from some of the recommendations of her majority report colleagues, and argued for a wider interpretation of insanity as grounds for divorce and a more restrictive one in the case of habitual

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<sup>54</sup> This was particularly evident in the exchanges between Lord Gorell and Sir Lewis Dibdin which became quite acerbic at times. The tone of the evidence throughout supports Frances Balfour's judgment about the weakness of Lord Gorell's chairmanship: see her letter to Betty Balfour, [2 Nov 1912, Balfour Mss. GD433/2/344].

<sup>55</sup> In response to a question from Isaacs, he had made the observation that 'A wise wife ... shuts her eyes to her husband's mistakes' [RC Evidence, 1912-13, xviii, Cd.6479, 44:685]. Lady Frances returned to this statement in her own questioning: 1912-13, xviii, Cd.6479, 65-6: 1240-44.

<sup>56</sup> Letter to Frank Balfour, 12 March 1910, Balfour Mss. GD433/2/340.

<sup>57</sup> RC Report, 1912-13, Cd.6478, xviii, p.177. The Minority Report was written by the Archbishop of York, Sir William Anson and Sir Lewis Dibdin.

drunkenness.<sup>58</sup> Lady Frances generally took a more robust view of most people's moral standards, and, as the commission progressed, was more concerned at the hypocrisy of the Church of England, a concern that developed into anger as the Church continued to block attempts to implement the commission's recommendations.<sup>59</sup>

She was committed to the cause of equal rights for women, but from an intellectual as much as from a humanitarian or moral standpoint, and, like some of her male colleagues, she tended to become absorbed in the enjoyment of argument for its own sake. None the less, her surviving correspondence indicates the extent of the organisation undertaken to ensure that women were represented. She and Mrs Tennant were not alone in their condemnation of the double standard in divorce law,<sup>60</sup> but their presence on the inquiry and their persistence in pointing out the need for equal treatment of men and women was a factor in ensuring the relatively progressive tone of the majority report.

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<sup>58</sup> Report, 1912-13, xviii, Cd.6478, p. 169. Frances Balfour did not dissent from the report's more liberal recommendations, although privately she opposed drunkenness as a cause for divorce. She noted in a letter to Betty Balfour: 'We have passed Insanity as a cause but not cruelty or drunkenness. I spoke against the last being a cause'. [Balfour Mss. GD/433/2/342, 12 May 1911.] She also recorded her views in her *Diary*: 'Spoke against drunkenness being a cause'. Balfour Mss.GD/433/2/425, 10 May, 1911. Her eventual support for the recommendation might have been because she wanted the majority report to be as unanimous as possible. She may also have had some responsibility for organising the many submissions sent to the commission from women's temperance organisations, as she was a leading member of the British Women's Temperance Association. Lord Gorell noted that they were receiving many such resolutions daily, [Evidence to RC, 1912-13, xix, Cd. 6480, 6 June 1910].

<sup>59</sup> She wrote on the subject to Mary Drew: 'The "Church" is hopeless, & must just be put on one side with her principles, wh. seem to me so exactly like the Pharisees of old. All the sense and growing conviction in on the side of wide Reform.' 15 Nov 1922, Gladstone Mss.

<sup>60</sup> It was certainly a concern of Lord Gorell - see his judgment in *Dodd v. Dodd*, quoted by McGregor [1957: 25].

**Table 5.2**

**Analysis of questioning of witnesses by the Royal Commission  
on Divorce**

The number of days each commissioner attended from a possible total of 56 sittings is given in brackets after their names.

	Average no. of questions per day of attendance	Total no. of questions	Total no. of questions to women	Percentage of questions to women
Gorell [55]	21.6	1189	79	6.6
York [34]	5.1	175	7	4
Derby [25]	3.1	77	2	2.6
<u>Balfour</u> [50]	1.5	75	15	20
Burt [38]	1.4	52	4	7.7
Guthrie [36]	6.6	238	4	1.7
Anson [25]	4.6	114	8	7
Dibdin [56]	7.2	401	19	4.7
White [40]	3.3	130	5	3.9
Atkinson [40]	5.4	214	4	1.9
<u>Tennant</u> [33]	2.7	90	11	12.2
Isaacs* [11]	8	88	-	-
Brierley [56]	4.5	254	21	8.3
Spender [38]	3.3	127	6	4.7
Treves [21]	2.7	57	7	12.3

\* Isaacs resigned from the commission in June 1910 and was replaced by Treves. He did not attend any of the sittings at which women gave evidence.

### 1[c] The Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1912-15

The women members of the commission, Elizabeth Haldane and Lucy Deane Streatfeild, did not seem to have been given an explicit role in organising the testimony of women witnesses, but there is evidence<sup>61</sup> that, like May Tennant and Frances Balfour, they collaborated to ensure that issues concerning women were highlighted. There were similarities in the social and professional backgrounds of the four women, which may have influenced the commission's selectors in their search for suitable precedents.<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Haldane had strong connections to the political establishment; her unmarried brother Richard was the Lord Chancellor during the first three years of her work on the commission, and she acted as his hostess. She was already an experienced and respected committee member, having previously served on two Government committees<sup>63</sup> as well as many others concerned with her work promoting the Army Nursing Service, and for hospitals and education in Scotland. Mrs Streatfeild had been a colleague of May Tennant's in the Home Office factory inspectorate, which made her one of the few members of the commission to have direct experience of the more routine work of the civil service.<sup>64</sup>

The commission was the first inquiry into the civil service to include any substantial contribution from women or to undertake any serious consideration of their work, although they had been employed in various

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<sup>61</sup> This is contained in Miss Haldane's letters to her mother, to whom she wrote daily when away from their home in Scotland. She concluded a long letter about various meetings with members of the commission: 'Then came 8 learned ladies to dinner, the Heads of Girton, Somerville, an Ed. inspector for the C. Council, a lady who worked in the Bank of England etc. etc. We had a long and fruitful discussion on women in the Civil Service, examinations, etc.' [7 Dec 1912, Haldane Mss. 6052, f.207.] The Federation of Women Civil Servants also noted the assistance of both women, as well as that of Philip Snowden and Graham Wallas, 'in the formidable task of preparing evidence', [1929: 7].

<sup>62</sup> The importance of precedents is clear in correspondence relating to all appointments and procedures of Royal Commissions and other committees. It was probably even more important in the early appointments of women.

<sup>63</sup> Departmental Committee on Additional Grants to Scottish Universities [1909-10], see below, p.244; and Inter-Departmental Committee on Outdoor Staff [1912-13].

<sup>64</sup> Those of her colleagues who did have such experience, had served at higher levels of the Service: for example, Sir Henry Primrose had been Chairman of the Inland Revenue Board; Sir Henry Babington Smith, who replaced Lord MacDonnell as chairman in 1915, had been secretary to the Post Office. Only Philip Snowden had had comparable experience to that of Mrs Streatfeild; he had joined the civil service as a junior excise clerk in 1886, but had retired in 1893 after illness had left him partially paralysed. [See Snowden (1934), Cross (1966).]

branches since the 1860s.<sup>65</sup> The Playfair Inquiry [1874-76] took evidence from only two women witnesses: Mrs Arundel Colliver, the Superintendent of Female Clerks in the Telegraph Clearing House Branch of the Post Office,<sup>66</sup> and Miss Gertrude King of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women.<sup>67</sup> The Ridley Commission [1886-90] did not consider the position of women in great detail, and had no women witnesses. Neither of these inquiries supported the extension of women's employment beyond the grades in which they were already appointed. The MacDonnell Commission did not have a specific reference to consider women's employment, but was primarily concerned with their recruitment and promotion [within its general terms of reference], and the gender-specific matter of equal pay.

The reports of the Playfair and Ridley inquiries<sup>68</sup> suggest that the parameters of women's employment in the Civil Service were firmly established well before the MacDonnell Commission, and were hardly likely to be shifted by the appointment of two women members, neither of whom held radical views on women's work, although they were both supporters of women's suffrage. Meta Zimmeck [1988] has examined the extent to which prejudice against women at higher levels of the civil service was shared by those women who had achieved such positions, and this can be seen in some of the views expressed by <sup>Lu</sup>Lucy Streatfeild, and, to a lesser extent, by Elizabeth Haldane; particularly in their acceptance of the commission's recommendation that women should not be admitted to the class I civil service examination. However, it is hard to judge how far such views reflected their own convictions, or how much they were a pragmatic acceptance of a gradualist approach to the expansion of women's careers. In private, Elizabeth Haldane was much more forthright on the injustices to

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<sup>65</sup> In 1861 there were almost 2,000 female clerks in the Civil Service; by 1871 there were over 3,300. [Evidence of Miss King to the Playfair Inquiry [1875, xxiii, C.113-1: 218]. See also Evans [1934], chapter 1; Martindale [1938], chapter 1, and the account given in chapter 10 of the commission's report [1914: 1914, xvi, Cd.7338].

<sup>66</sup> See also Martindale [1938: 24].

<sup>67</sup> Formed by the Langham Place Group in 1859. See Banks [1990(b): 38]; Lacey [1987: 11-12].

<sup>68</sup> Playfair concluded '...that women are well qualified for clerical work of a less important character, and are satisfied with a lower rate of pay than is expected by men similarly employed ...', and recommended that any extension of women's employment should be subject to strict supervisory conditions to ensure their separation from male workers. [1875, xxiii, C.1113, p.18.] This was endorsed by the Ridley Commission.



women in the civil service than was apparent in her questioning of the commission's witnesses. Both women signed dissents to the majority report indicating that they saw the current disparities in pay and conditions as temporary, and that they supported the principle of equal pay.<sup>69</sup>

Both women were extremely focused in their questioning, and rarely failed to direct the discussion towards the position of women.<sup>70</sup> In the commission's private meetings they argued that women should be able to progress through the various clerical grades in the same way as men. Elizabeth Haldane observed that

..the employment of women, as typists, for instance, with no prospect of a further career is objectionable ...

Mrs Streatfeild agreed, and added that

..many women who entered the Civil Service entered it for the purpose of a career, and not with a view to resignation and matrimony: she would throw all posts open to suitable women to be recruited by examination...<sup>71</sup>

The analysis of questions [table 5.3] shows that both women asked the same percentage [8%] of their total questions to women. That is not as high as the women's percentages for the Royal Commissions on Secondary Education and Divorce, and was also exceeded by Mr Booth on the Royal Commission on the Civil Service; he asked 13% of his questions to women witnesses. However, he attended on only 22 days which included three of the six days on which women gave evidence, while Mrs Streatfeild attended for only one of those days. That suggests that had she been able to question the other women witnesses, the overall percentage of her questions to women would have been similar to my other analyses of women's questions.<sup>72</sup>

The pattern of Elizabeth Haldane's questioning shows a much wider participation in the commission's proceedings than that of other women

<sup>69</sup> See Report 1914, xvi, Cd.7338, Reservations 6 and 7, p.114-15. Such gradualism was typical of many of Mrs. Streatfeild's colleagues in the Women's Trade Union League, and of many Labour women, such as Mary Macarthur.

<sup>70</sup> See table 5.3.

<sup>71</sup> Minutes of private meetings of the commission, Day 19, 12 June 1912 [PRO.T.100.E.126].

<sup>72</sup> Her absence was not from choice. Elizabeth Haldane told her mother that there was 'some important evidence today from women & I have been having a lot of communication about it as I am their only [stay?] now that my colleague is ill.' [Haldane Mss. 6053, f.1; 6 Feb 1913.]

analysed. Her rate of questions to women was high, but this was matched by one of the higher overall average rates of questions. Her daily average was four which compares with a number of other commissioners who had far higher attendance rates.<sup>73</sup> She asked more questions, and followed them up with far greater persistence, than either Mrs Streatfeild or the other women commissioners studied.<sup>74</sup> Mrs Streatfeild was usually the last to put her question, and rarely made any intervention that did not include some reference to women's position. Miss Haldane also concentrated many of her questions on women's employment, and was often concerned to reveal the depth and illogicality of the prejudice of male witnesses.<sup>75</sup> That was no mean task as such prejudice was matched by that of the chairman, Lord MacDonnell, who annoyed her when he questioned the two women representatives [Miss M.L. Cale and Miss F.A. Caldcleugh] of the Association of Post Office Women Clerks, by refusing to accept that women could be employed at the highest grades because of their reduced capacity to 'face difficulties'.<sup>76</sup> In her account of this she noted that

the women were splendid & a real credit to their sex ... they would not be brow-beaten by any of the solemn platitudes of the chairman over the relationship of man to woman as [founded] by Providence..<sup>77</sup>

She did not confine herself to questions about women's clerical employment,<sup>78</sup> but insisted on bringing out the poor working conditions of male and female employees at the lowest grades; for example, charwomen and messengers.

She did not seem to have been content merely to take her 'turn' like Frances Balfour; she often intervened quite early, and was frequently supported in continuing a line of questioning by Graham Wallas or Philip

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<sup>73</sup> For example, Graham Wallas, Sir Henry Primrose and Arthur Boutwood.

<sup>74</sup> It also holds true for her work on the Departmental Committee into Scottish Universities, discussed below, pp. 244-48.

<sup>75</sup> This approach is similar to that of Sophie Bryant and Ethel Sidgwick's uncovering of the institutionalisation of gender inequality within education; and Frances Balfour's constant references to the double standard in divorce legislation.

<sup>76</sup> Their evidence was taken on 7 March 1913. Evidence to RC, 1914, xvi, Cd.7340, 364-75: 31784-32097.

<sup>77</sup> Letter to Mrs Haldane, 8 March 1913, Haldane Mss. 6053, f.39.

<sup>78</sup> Mrs Streatfeild mainly concentrated on that topic.

Snowden.<sup>79</sup> She also ensured that questions were asked on her behalf during her absences from the commission, usually deputing this task to Sir Donald MacAlister.<sup>80</sup> She further consolidated her position on the commission by being one of the few members to travel to Ireland, when it held sittings there; as well as Lord MacDonnell [the chairman], the others were Sir Henry Primrose, Sir Donald MacAlister, Arthur Boutwood, Graham Wallas and Arthur Shipley. Her accounts of the various trips they made between meetings and their shared lunches and dinners underline the importance of such social contacts during these inquiries. Elizabeth Haldane clearly used them both to consult and to plan strategy with those colleagues she agreed with, and to win over those who opposed her.<sup>81</sup>

During the drafting of the report she was unable to secure all the recommendations she wanted concerning women's employment, and was again annoyed by the attitude of the chairman. She and Mrs Streatfeild had prepared a number of papers for the commission, which had apparently convinced some of the members to take a more progressive line on women's employment. Her letters talked optimistically about their work through the summer and autumn of 1913, and recorded a number of informal meetings with other members of the commission during which they had prepared their case for various recommendations in the draft. She also noted a number of meetings with the secretary, Sydney Armitage-Smith, of whom she later recorded that he was '...looking very much knocked up like everyone else...'.<sup>82</sup> In December 1913, she noted that they had

had a fresh battle yesterday for our Chairman had put in a number of

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<sup>79</sup> She recorded a number of social contacts with both Philip and Ethel Snowden, and had identified him as an ally early in the work of the Commission, noting that she and Mrs Streatfeild had visited him as he was '...rather important so we wanted to get his views on the woman question. We had a nice talk with him & his wife who is such a good speaker on the Suffrage.' [Letter to Mrs Haldane, 9 Dec 1912, Haldane Mss.6052, f.213.]

<sup>80</sup> See for example, his questions to G.S. Barnes, Comptroller-General of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, 14 March 1913. [RC Evidence, 1914, xvi, Cd.7340, 407: 32871.] Sir Donald was at that time Principal of Glasgow University and a friend and colleague of both Elizabeth and Richard Haldane. Her letters to her mother often refer to meeting him in connection with other committees and at social events; see, for example 3 May 1913, Haldane Mss. 6053, f.51.

<sup>81</sup> Her letters contain many examples; for another example of this form of networking see the letters of Charles to Mary Booth during the visits of his sub-committee of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws to Scotland and the West Country in June and July 1907. [Booth Mss. I/1716-I/1741.] See also references in chapter I, p.26

<sup>82</sup> 12 Feb 1914, Haldane Mss. 6054, f.7.

the objectionable plans about women that we had knocked out...<sup>83</sup>

but that they had eventually reinstated most of what they wanted.

However, on one issue she had no support from any of her colleagues, including Lucy Streatfeild: this was the proposal that women should be admitted to the class I examination, which she put forward on several occasions, but was always defeated.<sup>84</sup> Her letters began to describe an increase in tiredness and tension for all the commissioners,<sup>85</sup> and the multiply amended chapter on women's employment was finally agreed and passed on 5 March 1914.<sup>86</sup> There is no letter to Mrs Haldane recording that moment, although she did mention the signing of the report with some relief, and that 'It has all ended rather well for us'.<sup>87</sup>

The reports of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service did not lead to any great improvement in women's conditions, and reinforced much existing practice in its support for the marriage bar, and the limitation of the class I examination to men; although it did lay down the principle of equal pay. However, its failure to produce a more favourable result for women could not be ascribed to a lack of determination on the part of its women members, especially Elizabeth Haldane. Lucy Streatfeild's failure to support Miss Haldane over the class I examination is puzzling, as she had argued that all posts should be 'open to suitable women to be recruited by examination..', although she then qualified this by saying that

..there was something to be said for differentiating in favour of men in the higher ranks in view of their more serious responsibilities..<sup>88</sup>

However, given the unanimous opposition of the other members,<sup>89</sup> she may have been taking the pragmatic approach adopted by many other committee women who had experienced enough progressive improvements in their own position to convince them that gradualism worked.

<sup>83</sup> 6 Dec 1913, Haldane Mss. 6053, f.173.

<sup>84</sup> Minute Book, 28 Nov 1913 [PRO.T100/E126].

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, her comments on Armitage Smith. above, p. 234.

<sup>86</sup> Minute Book [PRO.T100/E126].

<sup>87</sup> 28 March 1914, Haldane Mss. 6054, f.45.

<sup>88</sup> Minute Book, 12 June 1912 [PRO.T100/E126].

<sup>89</sup> Even otherwise progressive members like Graham Wallas were strongly against the employment of women at higher levels of the service. See Minute Book, 13 June 1913 [PRO.T.100/28F].

**Table 5.3**

**Analysis of questioning of witnesses by the Royal Commission  
on the Civil Service**

The commission took oral evidence on 89 days; the number of days on which each commissioner attended is given in brackets after their names.

	Average no. of questions per day of attendance	Total no. of questions	Total no. of questions to women	Percentage of questions to women
MacDonnell [87]	13.9	1207	71	5.9
Devonshire [17]	0.6	10	-	
Southwark [18]	2.7	49	1	2
M-Mackenzie [68]	2.3	157	13	8.3
Primrose [73]	4	289	6	2.1
Granet [12]	1	12	-	
Booth [22]	2.3	51	5	9.8
Boutwood [87]	3.7	322	8	2.5
Hoare [47]	1.7	79	1	1.3
Holt [37]	1.8	67	4	6
Matheson [76]	2.2	166	12	7.2
Shipley [76]	2.9	222	11	5.7
Snowden [56]	3.1	175	10	6
Wallas [82]	3.8	308	15	4.9
<u>Haldane</u> [55]	3.9	216	18	8.3
<u>Streatfeild</u> [34]	1.5	50	4	8
MacAlister [46]	4.2	192	7	3.7
Beck [19]*	2	37	3	8.1
Clynes [34]	0.7	23	-	-

\* Beck was appointed on 12 July 1912 and his attendances are from a possible total of 60.

## 2. Committees with only one woman member

Before 1914 over half the committees that included women had only one woman member;<sup>90</sup> that was the case for only 18 of the 53 committees [that included women] appointed between 1914 and 1918. Between 1919 and 1929 the number of single appointees rose to 61 from a total of 125 committees with women members, which was almost a return to the pre-war situation.

The work of three women is considered here: Elizabeth Haldane on the Departmental Committee on Scottish Universities; Louise Creighton on the Royal Commission on London University; and Lilian Knowles on the Royal Commission on the Income Tax. In the first two cases it was their first membership of such a committee, and both Miss Haldane and Mrs Creighton went on to serve on others;<sup>91</sup> Lilian Knowles was already serving on the Departmental Committee into the Cost of Living of the Working Classes. Neither Elizabeth Haldane nor Louise Creighton had any specific or direct expertise in the subjects they were investigating, compared with that of Sophie Bryant or Eleanor Sidgwick in education, or Lucy Streatfeild's employment in the Civil Service.<sup>92</sup> Lilian Knowles was Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics, but this did not necessarily mean that she had a comprehensive expertise in contemporary taxation matters.

Mrs Creighton and Miss Haldane were the only women members of committees dealing with higher education appointed before the war. The Fords [1957] list 17 such inquiries between 1900-16,<sup>93</sup> and although subsequently all similar inquiries included women, such appointments were unique at that time. A further exception in their appointments was that neither woman had attended university, and suggests at the least a reluctance to appoint one of the many graduate heads of women's colleges who might have been assumed to have expert knowledge of the problems of

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<sup>90</sup> 27 out of 47 - see appendix 2.

<sup>91</sup> See appendix 2, and discussion above for Miss Haldane's work on the RC on the Civil Service.

<sup>92</sup> There are many other comparable examples of women whose experience was directly relevant to their appointments, and who had given expert evidence to other inquiries; see Ellen Pinsent and the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded, or the three women appointed to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.

<sup>93</sup> Their category of education also includes Select Committees, but these are not counted here as they would necessarily have excluded women as members until 1922.

university organisation.<sup>94</sup> As university-educated women were chosen for investigations into children's education,<sup>95</sup> it further implies that women's university education was not considered important enough to appoint women who had experienced it. I have argued that the choice of women to investigate the Concentration Camps during the Boer War was, in part, an indication to the military authorities that the Government considered the matter of relatively low importance. That consideration could also have applied to the appointment of women advisers on university education, where there was an equally firmly entrenched male establishment.

The reasons for the choice of the three women might not necessarily have been entirely due to such cynical motives, and their appointments might have reflected a more positive advance for women in that they were chosen precisely because they were not regarded as experts. However, their solitary status as the only women for their respective inquiries inscribed them as representative of women, whether or not they saw their role in that light.

If, as has been argued, Royal Commissions are concerned with the transmission of values,<sup>96</sup> then the choice of the members itself becomes one of the signals of such values, and these women were first and foremost representative of a class. They were committed to the improvement of women's position, [albeit from different perspectives] and were prominent writers and public speakers on that and other subjects, and thus could be presented as suitable representatives of women. However, they spoke from a class position and an authority that ensured their acceptance by their male colleagues, as well as from years of experience on voluntary committees, and in Dr Knowles' case in her dealings with professional colleagues. They were opposed to confrontational politics, and held conventional views about the extent and nature of women's public action. They believed that it was only through co-operation with men that social and political reform could be achieved; and that women's particular needs were comprised within a wide

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<sup>94</sup> Two later Royal Commissions did include women heads of colleges: Emily Penrose was a member of the 1916-18 RC on the University of Wales, and of the 1919-22 RC on Oxford and Cambridge, of which Blanche Clough was also a member. Emily Penrose was principal of Somerville College, Oxford from 1907-26, and Blanche Clough was Principal of Newnham College, 1920-23.

<sup>95</sup> See appendix 1 for qualifications of women on the Consultative Committee, many of whom were head mistresses or principals of leading schools or colleges.

<sup>96</sup> See discussion in chapter 1.

range of such reforms. Elizabeth Haldane was more directly involved in political activism as a member of the Scottish Women's Liberal Federation; and working for her brother during his election campaigns.<sup>97</sup> She acted as her brother's hostess during his years in office, and, as noted above, that gave her many opportunities to make and use contacts with politicians and civil servants to further her various interests.

Louise Creighton combined her work at the National Union of Working Women with an equally strong involvement with church administration, insofar as it was open to women.<sup>98</sup> After her husband's death she held a dowager-like position within the Church, and often records conversations with various church leaders, who consulted her on women's issues, and with whom she discussed educational and social matters.<sup>99</sup> She recognised that many women found it difficult to work alongside men, but did not always accept that this was men's fault, as she told her NUWW colleagues. She urged them to be less immersed in their work so as not to lose men's sympathy:

a woman is always bringing her work to the fore ..... and if she meets a man from whom she thinks that she might get some useful information about her work, she ... picks his brain directly to get the help she needs .. It is only human in men not to like that.<sup>100</sup>

Both women had interests in education, believing it to be of key importance in the resolution of class tensions, as well as in its positive value for women. Like many other women, they supported higher education for women of their own class, and sound practical and moral domestic education for girls and women of the lower classes. Mrs Creighton had

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<sup>97</sup> In particular, Haldane acknowledged her help in his campaign for re-election in 1911, [Haldane: 1929: 268]. See also E.S. Haldane [1937: 111]; Jalland [1986: 207]; and Hall and Martin [1996: 34, 68, 107].

<sup>98</sup> She was one of the organisers of the 1908 Pan-Anglican Conference and recorded their decision not to have separate women's sections, although they held a series of special meetings where the majority of the speakers were women. [Pan-Anglican Congress, 1908, Report of Women's Committee]

<sup>99</sup> She had a long friendship with Randall Davidson [1848-1930], Archbishop of Canterbury 1903-28. His wife was also a friend of Mrs Creighton and a colleague in the NUWW. See, for example, Covert [1994: 147], and various references throughout her correspondence. There are also references to her friendships with Frederick Temple [1821-1902], Mandell Creighton's predecessor as Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury 1897-1902, and his son William [1881-1944], who became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942. He had contacts with Mrs Creighton over a number of shared interests in social and ecumenical reform, some of which are briefly alluded to in Kent [1992].

<sup>100</sup> NUWW, Conference Report, Valedictory Address, 1904.



initiated 'Mothers' Meetings' when she lived in Northumberland;<sup>101</sup> Miss Haldane had trained as a rent collector with Octavia Hill and in this connection initiated various adult education schemes.<sup>102</sup> However, although circumstance and convention had dictated that they began their public work in this way, neither woman found such work as congenial as their later administrative and advisory roles. Louise Creighton liked her own domestic duties even less, and wrote that she did not think herself

a good person to be constantly with children .. [they] .. never let one have any rest, they are so terribly remorseless.<sup>103</sup>

Elizabeth Haldane admired the more practical work of her friends, but was not disposed to do it herself:

I cannot like dirty babies & can't help wondering how she does,<sup>104</sup> but the work is interesting & successful ... I only help with the collecting part!<sup>105</sup>

Lilian Knowles had a more complicated perspective on women's public action and the need to take positive steps to promote it. She belonged to a younger generation than Miss Haldane and Mrs Creighton; attended Girton College during the 1890s; and continued her academic career after her marriage to the barrister C.M. Knowles in 1904. Maxine Berg [1996: 71] has noted her support for her female students and colleagues at the London School of Economics,<sup>106</sup> but she seems to have firmly believed that women should compete with men on the same terms rather than be given special treatment to overcome institutionalised inequality.<sup>107</sup> She does not seem to have had great sympathy with women, and her surviving correspondence is with male colleagues; for example, she

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<sup>101</sup> She had held the first on 27 Jan 1879.

<sup>102</sup> Haldane [1937:114-120] for her account of her involvement with the Edinburgh Social Union and her work with the Home Reading Circle. She was also a member of a school board and later of a County Education Committee.

<sup>103</sup> Letter to her mother, Creighton Mss., 12 Feb 1877. She also wrote that her forthcoming confinement was 'not an event of much importance. I have not been glad about it and yet I don't particularly seem to want another child.' [To her sister Ida, Creighton Mss., 18 Dec, 1879]

<sup>104</sup> Frances Horner.

<sup>105</sup> Letter to Mrs Haldane, 2 Dec 1912, MS.6052, f.207.

<sup>106</sup> She was appointed as Lecturer in Modern Economic History in 1904, becoming a Professor in 1921.

<sup>107</sup> Helen Gwynne-Vaughan had similar views, which she put into practice in her academic work and as an officer in the WRAC. See also the reference to her submission to the RC on the University of London, below.

asked Edwin Cannan to be a trustee for her son, William, in the event of her early death, explaining that

It is the stepmother I dread for Willie especially if she had children of her own. Any woman could turn Charlie round her little finger and make him think black was white and I really want some outside person to be interested in Willie...<sup>108</sup>

Some of her comments during the proceedings of the Royal Commission also indicate a lack of sympathy with women in general; for example during her questioning of Sir Thomas Collins<sup>109</sup> she made a reference to the 'ordinary weak-kneed female relative whose forms have to be filled up...'.<sup>110</sup>

All three women highlighted women's concerns during the proceedings of their respective inquiries more effectively than they were able to incorporate them into the recommendations, although it is difficult to make comparisons. In this section I have not used the same scheme of analysis as earlier in the chapter, but will consider the two educational inquiries together, concluding with some observations on the Royal Commission on Income Tax.

## **2[a] The Departmental Committee on Additional Grants to Scottish Universities [1909-10] and the Royal Commission on the University of London [1909-13]<sup>111</sup>**

The Departmental Committee did not include any instruction concerning women in its terms of reference, which were to consider the claims submitted to the Treasury by Scottish universities for state funding. The Royal Commission had very broad and extensive terms of reference which mentioned the provision of 'advanced education for persons of either sex ..', but did not require the investigation of women's position in the university specifically. It also produced six volumes of reports and evidence against one for the Departmental Committee. The scale of the two inquiries was thus very different. None the less, some comparisons can be made between them in the nature of questions or discussions about women's

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<sup>108</sup> 7 Aug 1920, Cannan Mss. 1025, f.180. This might also be seen as exhibiting a somewhat dismissive attitude towards men, or at least towards her husband. He outlived her and married the equally forceful Dr Frances Ivens - see appendix 1.

<sup>109</sup> Chief Inspector of Taxes.

<sup>110</sup> Royal Commission on Income Tax, Minutes of Evidence, Vol I, 7 May 1919, 20:383.

<sup>111</sup> For memberships see appendix 3.

issues and the degree to which the women members participated in these.

Mrs Creighton certainly did not confine her questions to matters concerning women, although she did cover them, even if she rarely initiated them; for example, she used a general discussion about the low numbers of dentists to ask about opportunities for dental training for women. She pursued that line of questioning with several witnesses and on a few occasions was supported by her colleagues, but more frequently the subject was changed or the questions moved back to more general ones concerning dentistry. She did introduce questioning on equal pay, and elicited the response from the principal of the university, Sir Henry Miers, that 'My own feeling very strongly is that payment should be the same for the same work'.<sup>112</sup> The intervention came at the end of his evidence, however, and was not followed up by other members of the commission, nor was there a recommendation on equal pay in the report. In many sessions she neither asked questions about, nor put questions to, women; the general pattern of her interventions did not change when there were women witnesses.

One key question concerning women's representation within the university was that of their access to seats on its governing bodies, but this was not dealt with systematically by any of the commissioners, despite the contention of one witness, Professor M. Hill, that it was one of the hardest problems that the commission had to solve.<sup>113</sup> Mrs Creighton had questioned him on the subject as he had submitted a statement supporting a requirement that there should be obligatory seats in convocation for women members of the university. She also questioned Margaret Tuke on the matter, asking her if she thought that women's point of view in educational matters was '...somewhat disregarded ...' due to '...inadequate representation of women on the Senate ...'.<sup>114</sup> Miss Tuke replied that she thought it did make a difference, but could give no specific instances. As on other occasions, the male members of the commission did not continue the questions and the discussion was not sustained.

There was a strong statement from the London Graduates' Association, whose representative, Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, had been

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<sup>112</sup> RC Evidence, 1913, xl, Cd.6718, 143:16825-27.

<sup>113</sup> RC Evidence, 1911, xx, Cd.5911, 86: 6916.

<sup>114</sup> RC Evidence, 1911, xx, Cd.5911, 112: 7335-37.

unable to attend the commission in person. The association argued for equal treatment for men and women. There should be no special conditions for women either as staff or students; no places should be especially retained for them on governing bodies; there should be no difference in the age of matriculation for girls and boys; and there should be no special supervision for female undergraduates. The submission concluded that ..in every direction .. no special regulations should be made for women in their capacity as members of the University ...<sup>115</sup>

As the only specific reference to women in the Report's recommendations for the governance of the university was that four places should be reserved in the court for 'Four Headmistresses of London Schools appointed by the Headmistresses Association',<sup>116</sup> Mrs Creighton seems to have had little effect in strengthening women's position, although she did ensure that some matters of concern to women were discussed by the commission, even though they were not included in the report.

As far as her own general views on women in the university can be discerned, she tended towards the opinions expressed by the Graduates' Association. Dr Sophie Bryant and Miss Burstall gave evidence that women students were disadvantaged by the absence of women members of examination boards; and that each university should appoint a woman member of staff to be responsible for the health, control and discipline of women students. Mrs Creighton responded that this was to treat women students like schoolgirls, in which she was supported by other members, who pointed out that this was unequal treatment because there were no similar provisions for men. None of the commissioners attempted to distinguish between that issue and the points raised about equality in examinations. Mrs Creighton's questioning on other topics was more extensive and often more persistent than her interventions about women; for example, she engaged in a number of discussions about the effects of the university's external degree on the quality of theological education.<sup>117</sup>

The pattern and focus of Elizabeth Haldane's questioning on the Departmental Committee is easier to determine. Just over half her

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<sup>115</sup> The statement was submitted to the commission on 22 March 1912 and is published in Section IV, 'Status of Women' in RC Evidence, 1913, xl, Cd.6718, 112.

<sup>116</sup> See RC Report, 1913, xl, Cd.6717, 160: 360.

<sup>117</sup> See RC Evidence, 22 March 1912, 1913, xl, Cd.6718, 117-118.

questions or interventions concerned women's issues, in the form of financial provision for classes or courses for women: the only context that could be used under the committee's terms of reference. Her questions were mainly concentrated in the sessions dealing with the evidence about the Queen Margaret College for women at the University of Glasgow, and of the Scottish Association for the Medical Education of Women [part of that evidence was given by the only women witness, Dr Elsie Inglis<sup>118</sup>]. Miss Haldane was a member of the association, whose main objective was to persuade the University of Edinburgh to permit the medical education of women, and it might have been due to her presence on the committee that they felt empowered to come forward.

The representatives<sup>119</sup> were asked how they could reconcile their claims for recognition with the purely financial reference of the committee and replied that they did not believe that the university's claim for increased grant took into account the needs of women students and that this was particularly true for women medical students.<sup>120</sup> The matter was then raised by Elizabeth Haldane during the following day's examination of the principal and two senior members of Edinburgh University.<sup>121</sup> During the committee's consideration of the university's claim, reference was made to the medical faculty's demand for grants for additional teaching, and Miss Haldane asked a series of questions that revealed that, even though the faculty refused to teach men and women students together, none of the money would be allocated to the provision of teaching for women. She persisted with that line of questioning and attempted to clarify how far the faculty had a responsibility for the teaching of women, but despite the precision of her questioning, they refused to admit more than a limited responsibility relating to the recognition of teachers and the inspection of equipment. The witnesses expressed the view that if the committee were to persuade the Treasury to make a grant for women they would be happy to administer it, but that they would not consider the integration of medical classes.

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<sup>118</sup> Elsie Maud Inglis [1864-1917], one of the pioneers of medical training for women. She went on to serve in one of the front-line women's medical units during World War 1. Frances Balfour was one of her friends and supporters and wrote a memoir of her life [1918]. See also Leneman [1994].

<sup>119</sup> Sir Alexander Christison, Dr R.W. Philip and Miss E.M. Inglis.

<sup>120</sup> DC Evidence, 1909, xxvi, Cd.5257, 66-67: 978-982.

<sup>121</sup> Sir William Turner, Professor Chrystal, and Professor Rankine.

Miss Haldane was not alone in pressing that issue; the discussion was continued by her colleagues, and the matter was raised in their report, which included a weak critique of the Edinburgh University Medical School. The committee noted, but rejected, Sir William Turner's proposal that the university should be given a special grant to operate separate classes for women, and concluded that as other universities provided better facilities for women, they should go there instead. The refusal to approve the university's insistence on segregating women medical students is hardly a cutting indictment of prejudice, and did little to further the cause of those women who wished to study medicine at Edinburgh. In that sense, the committee took a similar line to that of the Royal Commission on London University by not endorsing measures that would treat women differently from men. In both cases the woman member of the inquiry raised questions of concern to women, although neither did so exclusively.

## **2[b] The Royal Commission on Income Tax [1919-20]**

This post-war commission, chaired by Lord Colwyn, was one of the last large inquiries, with over 20 members, all appointed in 1919; the others were the Royal Commissions on Agriculture,<sup>122</sup> and Oxford and Cambridge<sup>123</sup>. Such inquiries were categorised as representative by the 1910 Departmental Committee on the Procedure of Royal Commissions,<sup>124</sup> which advocated their replacement by smaller expert committees. None of the appointments to the Royal Commission on Income Tax were described as representative of particular interests in newspaper coverage, and Dr Knowles was defined by her professional qualifications and achievements in the same way as her male colleagues. In a further small recognition of women's equality of status, her own first names rather than those of her husband were used on the warrant of appointment.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> The commission produced only an interim report [1919, Cmd.473, viii] and did not complete its work. It had no women members or witnesses.

<sup>123</sup> The RC included two women members, Emily Penrose and Blanche Clough, principals of Somerville and Newnham Colleges, respectively. It took some evidence from women witnesses, but as this was not published in the usual verbatim form, the names of individual witnesses and the record of their evidence was not officially preserved. [Report, 1922, Cmd.1588, x; Evidence, Non P.P., 1922.]

<sup>124</sup> See chapter 1, and the report of the DC.

<sup>125</sup> The first time that this had been done for a married woman.

The commission's terms of reference were wide,<sup>126</sup> and although they did not directly mention women's taxation, it was included by implication. It was a subject that had been much debated and there were three major grievances: first, the comparatively low rate of the allowance to employed men with wives who had no income; secondly, the high rates of taxation on those with low earned incomes or incomes derived from savings; and finally, the practice of subsuming a wife's tax affairs with those of her husband. The last had been a focus of women's attention for a number of years and had led to the formation of the Women's Tax Resistance League in 1909.<sup>127</sup>

There is no indication that Dr Knowles had any part in organising the appearance of women witnesses before the commission. She would have been particularly unsuccessful if judged by the numbers, since only five of the 187 witnesses were women, one of the lowest figures for a Royal Commission during the 1910-19 period. She would, however, have known some of the women who gave evidence, particularly Mrs Ogilvie Gordon, President of the National Council of Women, and Mrs Hubback of the Women's Freedom League.

Her questioning of all witnesses invariably included a reference to separate assessment of husbands and wives or to other matters concerning women's income.<sup>128</sup> She did not ask such a high proportion of her questions to women witnesses as some of her male colleagues. She was not present during the examination of one of the women [Mrs Arbuthnot]; and only came in at the end of the evidence of Mrs Ogilvie Gordon. The women witnesses were treated with a degree of condescension bordering on hostility by some of the male commissioners. Mrs Ogilvie Gordon was repeatedly asked by the chairman and Sir Thomas Whittaker how the

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<sup>126</sup> See Sabine [1966: 158]. He gives a brief account of the background and recommendations of the Commission, pp. 157-162.

<sup>127</sup> Tax resistance by suffragists came into being as an organised movement in 1909, although it dated from the 1870s. The Women's Tax Resistance League was supported by the Women's Freedom League, and was most active during the years leading up to 1914. Some members continued their protests during the 1920s, and one, Mrs Ayres Purdie, gave evidence to the Royal Commission. The early organisation of the League is described in a pamphlet by Margaret Kington Parkes [c.1918], and for details of some of their activities see Mulvihill [1989].

<sup>128</sup> See for example her sharp questioning of Robert Shirkie of the TUC Parliamentary Committee on the family wage. [Minutes of Evidence, Vol. I, 1920, 31 July 1919, 450: 9410-17.]

Government would be expected to make up the loss of income that would result if the NCW proposals for tax reform were adopted. She pointed out that she had been asked only to present the views of the women in her organisation, and when pressed again said:

My lord I did not think that I was to be asked to assist you in your problem; and I find that there is no woman Commissioner at present in the room. But perhaps if you were to form a women's committee they might be able to give you some suggestions,

an offer which was repeated when Lilian Knowles had arrived, after Lord Colwyn had thanked Mrs Gordon for her evidence and was preparing to bring in the next witness.<sup>129</sup> The chairman's response to this was an indication of how he saw the role of his female commissioner. When Dr Knowles arrived late, she was grudgingly permitted to question Mrs Gordon,<sup>130</sup> who suggested that the NCW might reconsider their tax proposals in the light of the critique of the commissioners, but noted that

as long as they [the NCW] are kept outside the expert discussions, and have not the advantage of hearing and knowing the intimate facts they cannot properly consider a compromise.

Lord Colwyn's answer that 'Mrs Knowles is here'<sup>131</sup> implied that whatever her views about her appointment, he saw her as able to deal with any matters concerning women.<sup>132</sup>

Dr Knowles asked only one question of one of the commission's most controversial witnesses, Mrs Ayres Purdie, a chartered accountant and

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<sup>129</sup> His closing remarks to her are a model of the backhanded compliment: 'You have answered the questions extremely well, particularly when it is remembered that you are only one, and there are 20 people round you each with different ideas. I compliment you on the manner in which have answered. Your little speeches I have enjoyed thoroughly, and they have added to the pleasure of the meeting.' [RC Evidence, Vol. I, 1920, 21 May 1919, 73: 1462.]

<sup>130</sup> Evidence, Vol. I, 1920, 21 May 1919, 73: 1463.

<sup>131</sup> Evidence, Vol. I, 1920, 21 May 1919, 73: 1467-8.

<sup>132</sup> Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, whose views on the special treatment of women were similar to those of Professor Knowles [see above for her submission to the RC on London University], was taken for granted in a similar way during her membership of the RC on Food Prices [1924-25]. Despite her disinclination to associate herself with specifically women's issues, her male colleagues had other ideas about the division of their labour. The commission held a series of private meetings at which they discussed their methods of procedure, and during one of these [when Mrs Gwynne-Vaughan was absent] they agreed that she should be asked to arrange with the secretariat for the 'proper presentation of the evidence of housekeepers', [22 Jan 1925. Minutes of Private Meetings of the Commission, PRO. MAF.69/1.]



member of the tax resistance movement,<sup>133</sup> who gave evidence on behalf of the Women's Freedom League. Mrs Purdie's written evidence was a detailed condemnation of the principle of joint taxation of husbands and wives, and Dr Knowles drew her attention to the fact that as husbands and wives were treated separately for the assessment of estate duty, it could not be argued that their joint assessment for income tax purposes was discriminatory; it was merely a means of producing more revenue for the state. Mrs Purdie agreed with the latter, but maintained that it was a sex distinction as men were not treated in the same way. She then revealed that the present system suited her very well as she ran her own business and had paid no tax for twelve years as all returns were sent to her unemployed husband.<sup>134</sup> Dr Knowles asked no further questions, but Mrs Purdie's views and her tax avoidance were then strongly criticised by several of the other commissioners.

The views of the women witnesses were largely ignored by the commission's report, which recommended that there should be no change in the current system; that '...aggregation of the incomes of wife and husband should continue to be the rule..', and denied that this was '...dependent upon any medieval conception of the subordination of women ...'.<sup>135</sup> Dr Knowles produced a lengthy and eloquently argued reservation to that section, which supported the NCW, NUSEC, and WFL evidence.<sup>136</sup> She argued:

It is impossible that all the representation we have had from the various women's societies should be "more vocal than real", as suggested in the main body of the Report. The whole trend of recent legislation has been to regard the woman and the man when married as two separate persons ..... The doctrine of identity of interest and consequent ability to pay is .. still maintained to penalise a special class of persons who are easily get-at-able ...'<sup>137</sup>

In some respects the reservation is at odds with her personal views, as expressed during the commission's proceedings; she did not agree with Mrs Purdie that the tax laws were discriminatory, and had mentioned on another occasion that she had chosen to be separately assessed and found

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<sup>133</sup> See above, note 127.

<sup>134</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 16 July 1919, 332: 6741-49.

<sup>135</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Income Tax, 1920, xviii, Cmd. 615, 58-59: 259-60.

<sup>136</sup> She also signed two other reservations with various of her colleagues, only one of whom [Mr J.W. Clark] supported her reservation on women's taxation.

<sup>137</sup> Report, 1920, xviii, Cmd. 615, 153.

the position satisfactory. In writing the reservation, she was ensuring that the views of those women who had given evidence were represented.

### Conclusion

Women were appointed to committees for a variety of reasons: in some cases for their specific knowledge; in others because they were eminent in professional or philanthropic work. They were usually expected to represent women, and in their political views and social connections were well fitted to do so; most had extensive previous experience of public and private committee work, and several had given evidence to other Government inquiries.<sup>138</sup>

The patterns of women's questioning described above were reproduced in other inquiries throughout the 1920s; space prevents a detailed examination, although the tables analysing the questioning in three Royal Commissions of the 1920s have been included as tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6.<sup>139</sup> Women asked neither the highest, nor, usually, the lowest number of questions. If the number of days attended by each commissioner is related to the number of questions asked, seven<sup>140</sup> of the 13 women commissioners discussed in the tables had a lower number of questions than comparable men. Four women<sup>141</sup> had a higher average than that of men who attended for about the same number of days and one, Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, attended the Royal Commission on Food Prices on the same number of days as William Grant [18 of the 19 days on which it heard oral evidence] and asked almost the same average number of questions, 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. Ethel Snowden attended the same commission on only seven of the 19 days, but had a daily average of three questions, higher than that of other commissioners who had attended more frequently.

However, women did not pursue their questioning as persistently as men and were less likely to maintain it for long periods; they generally spoke

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<sup>138</sup> This was the case for E.S. Haldane, S. Bryant, M. Tennant, L. Streatfeild, E. Sidgwick. It was also true for many of the other women who served as members of Government committees.

<sup>139</sup> The Royal Commissions on Lunacy and Mental Disorder, 1926-26, Food Prices, 1924-5, and Police Powers and Procedure, 1928-29.

<sup>140</sup> Cavendish, Sidgwick [table 5.1], Balfour, Tennant [table 5.2], Mathew, Symons [table 5.4] and Talbot [table 5.6].

<sup>141</sup> Bryant [table 5.1], Haldane, Streatfeild [table 5.3] and Beavan [table 5.6].

less.<sup>142</sup> Even when questioning women witnesses women commissioners did not ask as many questions in total as their male colleagues. However, the percentage of questions asked by women commissioners to women witnesses remained high in comparison to that of men throughout the period,<sup>143</sup> and was almost always higher than the percentage of questions to women by male commissioners.

All the women discussed here wrote and lectured on various subjects, and in such writing and other forms of social and political activism they demonstrated the strong moral views that equally influenced their committee work. They differed politically, both in the degree and nature of their party allegiances and in their commitment to women's suffrage, but they shared a similar view of the importance of social progress and women's responsibilities in bringing it about.

The results of such influences through committee work are not quantifiable, although particular views or attitudes can be revealed in questions or statements. The way that women interpreted their role as committee members had some effects. They influenced the selection of witnesses for some inquiries, ensuring a wider representation of women's views than might otherwise have been achieved, although that seems to have been more common earlier in the period; by the 1920s proportionately fewer women witnesses appeared before Royal Commissions.<sup>144</sup> Women members could be instrumental in focusing the attention of witnesses and male committee members on particular areas of injustice or concern to women. Their comments were officially recorded, which helped to keep policy-makers aware that women's concerns merited some consideration.

The influence of any individual on the final report of an inquiry is hard

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<sup>142</sup> The two women discussed here who were most persistent in their questioning were May Tennant and Elizabeth Haldane.

<sup>143</sup> The highest percentage was that of Sophie Bryant at 30.5 [see table 5.1]; only four women had percentages of less than 20: Helen Gwynne-Vaughan [15.8%], May Tennant [12.2%], Elizabeth Haldane [8.3%] and Lucy Streatfeild [8%]. Those percentages were nevertheless higher than those of most of the men on the same commissions.

<sup>144</sup> Over half the Royal Commissions appointed between 1920 and 1929 heard evidence from women witnesses, but the numbers of women were small by comparison to those of men. For example, the Royal Commission on Licensing in England and Wales had 189 witnesses, of whom only 8 were women; of the three commissions examined in tables 5.4-5.6, the Royal Commission on Food Prices had four women witnesses, the Royal Commission on Police Procedures had 50 witnesses, of whom five were women and the Royal Commission on Lunacy and Mental Disorder had 128 witnesses, of whom 17 were women.

to trace, except in the few cases when documentary evidence shows that a particular person wrote all or the major part of a report; for example Helen Bosanquet's part in writing the majority report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, or the role of Sidney Webb [who was not even a member of the commission] in writing the minority report of the Royal Commission on Labour. The wider impact of such reports on Government policy is usually impossible to assess, as a number of commentators have pointed out. It is possible to infer, however, from the social and political networks of men and women that committee work played some part in the dissemination of ideas, helping to create bonds between like-minded people. Committee service could also help to break down the barriers of prejudice that divided men and women, although such homogenising effects were likely to be temporary, lasting only for as long as the committee sat.

The inquiries analysed here suggest that women were more successful in promoting women's issues when there was more than one woman member of a committee, although even this has to be qualified by the limits of each individual's view of her responsibility to represent women. Women, and men, were constrained by the terms of reference of the inquiry, and by the arbitrary parameters of its composition. Both could be used to ensure that some subjects, or some aspects of them, were ruled out of the inquiry.

The previous public work of the women who were chosen enabled the committee appointers to assess how individuals might respond to the subject of the inquiry; militant suffragists were never likely to be chosen.<sup>145</sup> However, that public work also revealed the strong sense of social responsibility that characterised so many women, and ensured that they felt an obligation to represent women, even though they might not have accepted that that was the reason why they had been asked to serve on the committee.

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<sup>145</sup> One exception was Mrs Pankhurst, who had been asked to serve on a war-time committee, but refused, explaining that 'My experience of public work has convinced me that it is a mistake to have committees if one wishes effective work to be done'. [E. Pankhurst to Sir James Murray, 25 July 1915, Lloyd George Mss. D/11/2/1-30.]

**Table 5.4**

**Analysis of questioning of witnesses by the Royal Commission  
on Lunacy and Mental Disorder**

The commission heard oral evidence on 42 days; the number of days on which each commissioner attended is given in brackets after their names.

	Average no. of questions per day of of attendance	Total no. of questions	Total no. of questions to women	Percentage of questions to women
Macmillan [40]	50.2	2009	157	7.8
Russell [40]	34.3	1372	118	8.6
Percy*				
Rolleston [36]	4.9	177	19	10.7
Hutchison**				
Hiley [38]	3	117	13	7.3
Drummond [37]	12.1	450	33	7.3
Jowitt [16]	8.3	133	11	8.3
Mackinnon*				
Micklem [35]	12.6	444	84	18.9
Snell [38]	5.3	203	29	14.3
<u>Mathew</u> [40]	2.3	93	25	26.9
<u>Symons</u> [38]	2.6	99	23	23.2

\* Both resigned from the commission at an early stage, and their questioning has not been included in the analysis.

\*\* Died 25 April 1925

**Table 5.5**

**Analysis of questioning of witnesses by the Royal Commission  
on Food Prices**

The commission heard oral evidence on 19 days; the number of days on which each commissioner attended is given in brackets after their names.

	Average no. of questions per day of attendance	Total no. of questions	Total no. of questions to women	Percentage of questions to women
Geddes [19]	14.1	267	9	3.4
MacLeod [15]	3.1	47	1	2.1
Rew [19]	5.3	101	6	5.9
Peat [13]*	1.2	16		
Mackinder [16]	4.3	69	2	2.9
Coller [19]	2.5	47	3	6.4
Layton [10]	3.6	36	2	5.6
Powell [17]	3.5	59	2	3.4
Dudley [19]	2.8	54	1	1.9
Grant [18]	2.2	39	1	2.6
Paul [16]	0.8	12	-	
Ryland [13]	2.8	36	2	5.6
Smith [17]	5.1	86	6	7
Stephenson [19]	2.4	45	2	4.4
<u>Gwynne-Vaughan</u> [18]	2.1	38	6	15.8
<u>Snowden</u> [7]	3	21	6	28.6

**Table 5.6**

**Analysis of questioning of witnesses by the Royal Commission  
on Police Powers and Procedure**

The commission took oral evidence on 22 days; the number of days on which each commissioner attended is given in brackets after their names.

	Average no. of questions per day of attendance	Total no. of questions	Total no. of questions to women	Percentage of questions to women
Lee [22]	16	351	40	11.4
Ebbisham [17]	0.9	16	5	31.3
Frank [22]	4.8	105	4	3.8
<u>Talbot</u> [21]	3.6	75	19	25.3
Poole [22]	10	220	26	11.8
Brownlie [10]	3	30	-	-
<u>Beavan</u> [17]	2.5	43	10	23.3
Pick [22]	8	175	8	4.6

## Conclusion

**Honorary Chaps and Token Women**

By 1918 women were recognised and defined as an interest group by Governments<sup>1</sup> and it was accepted that they should be represented on some, but by no means all, official bodies. The parameters for women's participation in committees that had been established over the previous 30 years continued and were reinforced as appointments of all members became more overtly representative of political or commercial interests. Women might also represent those interests, and there is some evidence to show that Governments tried to balance the party political representation of women in some larger committees,<sup>2</sup> but they were never chosen primarily as political representatives. Such attempts at political balance might have contributed to the view that women's position on committees was token. In fact, their presence was no more token than that of men, as all committee membership could be seen as a form of tokenism, but as there were usually only one or two women on such committees their isolation made them more noticeable.

The dominance of Liberal women, that was so obvious before World War 1, had given way, during the war, to an increased number of Labour women, and the participation of Conservative women grew during the 1920s. The demands of war-time administration had produced a temporary rise in the numbers of women appointed, but that was mainly through the establishment of advisory committees to support the work of newly-created sections or departments of women's affairs, like the Women's Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction. After the war those departments were abolished or absorbed into the general work of the Department or the Ministry concerned.<sup>3</sup> The level of women's participation then returned to what it had been before the war: an average committee of eight to ten members included one or two women, and, apart from the 1923 Committee on Domestic Service, no further all-women committees were

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<sup>1</sup> One of the clearest examples of such definition is in Lord Birkenhead's assessment of the need for women magistrates. See chapter 4, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Royal Commissions on Food Prices [1924-25] and the Civil Service [1929-31].

<sup>3</sup> In some cases, for example, the Ministry of Reconstruction or the Ministry of Food, the Ministries themselves were disbanded.



appointed.<sup>4</sup>

The criteria adopted for appointments to committees as well as to other public boards,<sup>5</sup> ensured that women remained within the domestic areas already defined through their previous participation in public life, while the nature of their work and the ratio of their appointments to that of men remained constant across all such bodies. In 1924, *Time and Tide* observed that equality was

today still apt to be deemed achieved by a committee upon which sit twelve men and two carefully selected women.<sup>6</sup>

Although the disproportionate ratios of men to women on committees persisted during the 1920s and beyond, after the war there were limited changes in the class and political representation of women on committees, and some attention was paid to the point of view of the working woman. Members of Parliament and committee appointers were much more concerned with this person after her possession of the vote, although the preoccupation had begun during the war years.<sup>7</sup> The representation of the working-class woman became a frequent feature of Parliamentary debates during the 1920s, which could reveal deep class and gender bitterness, disguised as typically robust parliamentary exchanges, and which often involved Nancy Astor.<sup>8</sup>

The major change for women's membership of committees after 1919 was that women Members of Parliament could be appointed to Select and Standing Committees,<sup>9</sup> where even the opponents of women's suffrage gave them a grudging welcome. Lady Frances Balfour cited the reaction of

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<sup>4</sup> During the second world war, committees were appointed to deal with women's issues, but they always included men.

<sup>5</sup> For example, National Insurance and Poor Law Boards, or management and visiting committees for hospitals or schools.

<sup>6</sup> *Time and Tide*, 5 Dec 1924, p.1183. The ratios remain much the same.

<sup>7</sup> See Lady Emmott's letter to Christopher Addison, 24 May 1918, on the inclusion of women on Local Authority Housing Committees: 'Working-class women are really indispensable...' [RECO1/625/6580] (see also p.198); and the discussions of the Ministry of Reconstruction Women's Advisory Committee for a sub-committee on Health Services, where nine named individuals were proposed plus '...a woman doctor and representative working women...'. [RECO 1/751, 11 Nov 1918.]

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the parliamentary exchanges relating to the appointment of the RC on Food Prices.

<sup>9</sup> See Introduction for a description of different kinds of Government committee.

the fourth Marquess of Salisbury:<sup>10</sup>

Nunky of course does not like it ... but agreed with Billy Gore<sup>11</sup> if elected they wd [be] of immense use on some of the Bills sent to Grand or other Committees ...<sup>12</sup>

The choice of women MPs for such committees was subject to the same gender determinations as their appointments to non-parliamentary committees, with the additional constraint of their small numbers. Only a few women MPs served on *ad hoc* Select Committees up to 1930, mostly on committees investigating matters conventionally defined as of concern to women and/or children. [See appendix 2, nos. 126, 150, 179, 190 and 208.]

Ambivalence continued over whether women serving on committees should associate themselves primarily with the concerns of women and children. *The Vote*, which reflected the general views of the Women's Freedom League,<sup>13</sup> took the line that women should be included on all Government committees, but also argued for their appointments in specific cases because of the need to represent women's views. The journal's reactions to the announcement or appointments of committees were often similar to that of the mainstream press, and were a mixture of approval and complaint. Inquiries were campaigned for or demanded, but when they were announced, and even more frequently when they reported, were criticised for such things as the partisan views of their members, or their failure to produce the recommendations wanted by the critic.<sup>14</sup>

Associations and their individual members held a range of views about women's role in public life; there were many women who continued to believe that they should confine themselves to what were seen as women's issues. That could have been both from conviction, and from their conventional pragmatic strategy of concentration on matters affecting women, in order to seem less threatening and to gain a public platform from which to move on to more partisan matters. There were, of course, many

<sup>10</sup> Lord James E.H. Gascoyne-Cecil (1861-1947), known as 'Nunky' to his family, succeeded his father to become fourth marquess of Salisbury in 1903.

<sup>11</sup> William G.A. Ormsby-Gore (1885-1964) fourth Baron Harlech; Unionist MP for Denbigh 1910-18, and in 1917 parliamentary private secretary to Lord Milner.

<sup>12</sup> F. Balfour to Lady Betty Balfour, 26 Oct 1917, Balfour Mss. GD.433/2/360.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter 2, pp.82-86. *The Vote* regularly drew attention to the need for women committee members during the 1920s.

<sup>14</sup> This can be traced most comprehensively in the *Times*, and there are some references in chapter 1.

urgent issues that did affect women's social and political rights, and women councillors and Members of Parliament had to reconcile competing responsibilities to their constituents.<sup>15</sup>

Historical and biographical accounts of women MPs suggest that patterns of appointment were similar for Standing Committees and Standing Select Committees.<sup>16</sup> Women MPs were usually seen as having a double interest: that of their constituents; and that of all women. Women's previous and continuing non-parliamentary committee participation formed an important precedent<sup>17</sup> by defining them as one among many interest groups; it had thus become normal for a small proportion of women to be appointed to only some kinds of committee. The appointment of women to both standing and *ad hoc* Select Committees continued to reflect and sustain such precedents; the only standing Select Committee to which they were consistently appointed during the 1920s was the Catering Committee.

The precedents governing such appointments persisted far beyond the 1920s. In 1981 Jo Richardson MP noted that

We've still got the same system whereby if it's considered to be a women's issue, i.e. maternity rights or employment or social security affecting women, they always look at me or whoever happens to be on the committee and say: 'Well, that's your speech of course'.

.... when we were considering our tactics ... and it came to an issue specifically affecting women they'd all look at me and say: 'Of course that's yours.' When I dreamt up a few of my own, like we should have more women on the Social Security Advisory Committee, they all leapt up and down: 'We can't have every minority group represented'!<sup>18</sup>

The low ratio of women to men on committees was based not on electoral representation, but on interest representation and has proved to be a powerful precedent for women's participation in public life.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Brookes [1967: 96 ff]; B. Harrison [1986]; and Fellowes [1965: 259].

<sup>16</sup> See Brookes [1967].

<sup>17</sup> Their participation in local councils was another powerful contribution to this precedent. See Hollis [1987].

<sup>18</sup> In Adlam et al [1981:138-39]. See also Hennessy [1986], cited in chapter 1. The practice of concentrating women in committees dealing with women's issues continues; a recent Standing Committee debating social security measures affecting lone parents, contained more women MPs than men. [Sixth Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation; Social Security (Lone Parents) (Amendment) Regulations, 12 Nov 1997]. The more usual ratio of men to women on such committees is approximately 4:1.

<sup>19</sup> See *Times* [22 Dec 1997: 8] report on the 1997 publication of *Public Bodies*.

The committee form itself changed only slightly during the 1920s; Government economies dictated the appointment of much smaller inquiries, which were subject to a revitalised Treasury scrutiny after what some Treasury officials were inclined to see as a period of slack control of committees during the war years.<sup>20</sup> However, although there was never a return to the large showpiece Royal Commissions of the nineteenth century, larger inquiries were still used; for example the Royal Commissions into Food Prices [1924-25], Licensing in England and Wales [1929-31], and the Civil Service [1929-31].<sup>21</sup> There was also a concentration of certain kinds of inquiry into the semi-permanent Consultative Committees of the Ministries of Education, and Health, which created [or continued in the case of education] large committees with an average membership of 20 people.<sup>22</sup> There is some evidence that the representative social and political composition of committees received more consideration during this period,<sup>23</sup> but the backgrounds of those chosen remained much as they had been for the previous 30 years.

Appointments to committees were little more representative in terms of class than they always had been. Indeed, not only did women continue to

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<sup>20</sup> For example, the practice of submitting Royal Commission Warrants and other correspondence to the Treasury for approval had lapsed. See E. Harrison [1995: xviii.] This and other variations from pre-war practice might have had less to do with inefficiency than with the absence of anyone who knew what the correct procedure was. Procedural forms were based on precedents that were rarely written out formally, but were passed down through generations of civil servants. Many of these men had been killed during the war, and that suggests one tragic reason for the frequency of notes and questions about precedents on civil service files during the 1920s. See Douglas [1987] for related arguments about institutional memory.

<sup>21</sup> There were also a number of inquiries into conditions in India which did not have many members, but were, none the less, very large in scope and very expensive.

<sup>22</sup> The Education Committee had been in existence since 1900, and had always included women among its members, usually about a quarter of the total. The Consultative Councils of the Ministry of Health had been set up in 1920 after the Ministry's creation in 1919; there was one Council each for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The proportions of women were similar to those of the education committee. Some of the advisory committees of the Ministry of Reconstruction continued into the early 1920s; for examples concerning women, see the Committees on Agriculture in appendix 2. There were also three women members of the Housing Advisory Council set up in 1919; Lady Emmott, Mrs E. Barton, and Mrs A. Sanderson Furniss. A National Advisory Council on Juvenile Employment was formed in 1929, chaired by Lord Shaftesbury, which had four women among its 28 members.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the correspondence about the appointments of the Royal Commissions on London Squares and Licensing [PRO.HLG10/2 (91680/3/13) and PRO.30/69/1302, respectively]. However, the matter cannot be assessed with any certainty, as there is not enough surviving documentary evidence to enable a comparison to be made between the 1920s and earlier periods.

be appointed from the same class background, they were in many cases the same women. Some of those who had been active during the early years of the century had given up such work by the end of the war, but others continued their committee service. Lady Emmott, May Tennant, Gertrude Tuckwell, Violet Markham, and Lucy Streatfeild were members of committees through the 1920s and beyond.<sup>24</sup>

Appointments of women experts became less common after 1918, with the exception of education committees.<sup>25</sup> That in part reflected the presence, however limited, of women at higher grades of the civil service,<sup>26</sup> who provided much of the expertise in labour or industrial matters previously given by, for example, May Tennant, Lucy Streatfeild or Mary Macarthur. However, women civil servants were not usually appointed to committees to represent directly their specific expertise. Like high-ranking male civil servants, some of these women were appointed to committees late in their careers or after retirement because they had been eminent civil servants; and in that sense were like the "honorary chaps" referred to by Jonathan Charkham in the 1980s.<sup>27</sup> Women such as Beryl le Poer Power, Maude Lawrence, Clara Rackham or Adelaide Anderson had proved their reliability and a general support for the established social and political world as civil servants, and that enhanced their suitability for committee work.

Even if one male and one female civil servant were appointed to a committee, that was not matched by a similar parity in the other appointments. The majority of committees had always included at least one Member of Parliament, but after 1918 this was hardly ever a woman. Committees dealing with legal matters continued to exclude expert women as members. Women doctors were more frequently appointed to medical inquiries, although they were not included in all such committees.

The movement away from the appointment of women experts as committee members was more apparent in appointments to Royal Commissions, where it was also accompanied by a reduction in the

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<sup>24</sup> This group were active over the longest period. There was another slightly younger generation of women who had begun their public careers just before the War who were also prominent during this period; for example, Margaret Mackworth [Lady Rhondda], Madeleine Symons, Shena Simon, and Margaret Bondfield.

<sup>25</sup> The Consultative Committee continued to meet throughout this period, and was of major importance in the institutional establishment of women's expertise as educationists.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Beryl le Poer Power, Clara Rackham or Hilda Martindale.

<sup>27</sup> Cited in Hennessy [1986], see above, chapter 1.

numbers of women witnesses.<sup>28</sup> These fell both absolutely and relatively, in proportion to men, during the 1920s;<sup>29</sup> and although women's organisations such as the National Council of Women<sup>30</sup> continued to provide witnesses, its members felt that their role was being restricted.<sup>31</sup> Other organisations seem to have been even less well represented: the Women's Co-operative Guild sent no witnesses to any Royal Commission during the 1920s. The WCG was part of the Standing Joint Committee of Women's Organisations which provided witnesses to a number of inquiries during the period, but its representatives reflected the dominance of middle-class women that was apparent in the women's trades union movement.<sup>32</sup>

Changes in trades unionism also affected women's committee appointments. The separate women's trades union movement disappeared in the 1920s, following the decision to guarantee two seats for women on the Trades Union Council, and the replacement of the Women's Trade Union League by a committee of the TUC General Council.<sup>33</sup> Thereafter there was little or no participation by women unionists, either as members or witnesses, in Government committees dealing with employment and labour matters.<sup>34</sup> For example, the TUC General Council sent four witnesses to the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance [1930-32], but none of them were women.<sup>35</sup>

Other inquiries confirmed the patterns for women's committee participation that had been set and demonstrated in the examples given in the thesis. Despite the insistence of women's groups that there should be equal representation of men and women on all committees, there were no moves to regulate such appointments. However, there were now firm

<sup>28</sup> My impression is that this was the case for all forms of committee, but I have only made a full check of Royal Commissions.

<sup>29</sup> For example, the Royal Commissions on Income Tax, Food Prices or Police Powers each heard evidence from only four women.

<sup>30</sup> The National Union of Working Women had been renamed the National Council of Women in 1918.

<sup>31</sup> See chapter 2, p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> They were often represented by Dr Marion Phillips; see Royal Commissions on Income Tax, National Health Insurance, Unemployment Insurance.

<sup>33</sup> This was the Women Workers' Group. See Boston [1987: 147].

<sup>34</sup> The only exceptions were Julia Varley, Madeleine Symons and Gertrude Tuckwell. Miss Symons and Miss Tuckwell held a variety of honorary posts, and these may have been more influential in determining their choice as committee members; for example, both were J.P.s.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes of Evidence, NPP, Ministry of Labour, 1931, 1932, 1933. There were 70 witnesses in all.

precedents in the cases in which it had been decided to appoint women, and there were rarely more than two or three women members of any commission or committee. The highest number of women appointed to a Royal Commission up to 1930 were the five female members of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service [1929-31]. However, although they formed a third of the membership, that tended to define them as a women's committee within the commission, and to reinforce the separation of women's interests. This was further confirmed by the pattern of women's participation as witnesses. The numbers of inquiries that took evidence from women was higher during the 1920s, but the absolute numbers of women who gave such evidence fell by comparison with earlier years. Furthermore, evidence from women's associations continued to confirm the dominance of middle-class women as representatives for all women that had begun during the late nineteenth century.

Despite the protestations of various appointing Ministers that committee members were chosen for their merits, regardless of sex, that was manifestly not the case. The cases examined here typically show women who had devoted most of their lives to work for women and children, and who were appointed only to inquiries in which there was seen to be a women's interest,<sup>36</sup> and to which women had themselves lobbied hard for inclusion. Many of the women concerned might not have been willing to join committees where there were no specific issues connected with women, but that did not mean that they were either incapable or unqualified to discuss them. They were simply not asked.

However, the continued appointment of the same women, or the same type of woman, has contributed to the myth that all committees during this period had a woman member: the token woman, whose presence had little effect. That implies a negativity about women's political activity which is not justified by their individual and collective efforts. For women activists, whether conservative or radical, their concentration on women's issues was politically and morally necessary, and to some extent they deliberately contributed to the creation of women as a political interest group, although their focus on these matters in committee work was not always of their own

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<sup>36</sup> There were a few exceptions: some of the appointments made by the first Labour Government in 1924, and Caroline Bridgeman's appointment to the RC on London Squares in 1927.

choice. They were constrained by a range of political and social factors: most notably, the general rise of interest group politics within a more polarised party system; and the cumulative effect of prejudice against women in public life, combined with male and female uncertainty over women's future political participation.

Many of the women came from families with interests in, and influence on, politics. They were part of powerful networks, through which they were informed about weighty and trivial political matters. Some had had a social training [in high society] that made them adept at recognising and reconciling differing views. Many of them also used those skills in charitable social work, another form of training that brought them into contact not only with the poor and disadvantaged, but with like-minded women of a similar moral outlook. Women from the elite and the middle classes shared membership of the NUWW [later NCW] and through that organisation were enabled to lobby Governments on reformist social policies. Other women's organisations were also important, especially those which brought Labour and socialist women together, but members of these associations were often also members of the NUWW/NCW. The influence of the NCW had lessened by the 1920s, but during the later years of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, it was of central importance both as a voice for women and thereby as a determinant of Government policy.

The decline of the direct influence of the NUWW/NCW was in part replaced by the wider educational and career opportunities of middle class women. Appendix 1 shows the dominance of certain schools and colleges for women and although the networks that were developed through education and in professional life were small, that did not minimise their importance. The women connected in such ways formed a tight circle of influence, based on a shared ethos of public service.

The women discussed here were members and supporters of the political nation; many were involved with movements or campaigns to improve women's lives, but few were extremist.<sup>37</sup> That would not have qualified them for membership of Government committees. For the most part they were conventional, establishment women, able to reach a consensus with others, often through compromise. To that extent they might be defined

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<sup>37</sup> Some women appointed to committees during the 1920s, and later, had been imprisoned for suffrage activities.



as token, or as behaving so like men in the same positions that they failed to represent women - ostensibly the reason for their appointments. However, that description denies and denigrates their individual achievements; the many similarities in their biographies should not be dismissed as signs that they were interchangeable conformists whose presence on committees was of little more practical value than the existence of the committee system as a whole. The similarities of background and outlook between the first women to serve on such committees marked a morality that had some force in British public and political life during the early years of the twentieth century. They demonstrated that morality in their committee work, through which it was incorporated into the network of values that maintained a social and political structure of representation that changed little over the succeeding decades.

**Appendix 1****Biographies of women committee members, 1893-1929**

The appendix lists the names of women who served on committees between 1890 and 1929. It is cross-referenced to the committees listed in appendix 2; the numbers bold at the end of each entry refer to the committee on which the woman served. The main sources were *Who Was Who*, the *Dictionary of National Biography* [I have indicated entries in the DNB, these refer to the editions currently available], the registers of the Cambridge and Oxford women's colleges, the Fawcett Library cuttings collection, the *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, *The Times*, the *Englishwoman's Year Book*, and the records of the National Union of Working Women and the Women's Liberal Federation. The listing is part of a continuing search for information about women in public life that will take many years to complete.

Abbreviations: b. born; d. died; ktd. knighted; m. married. Reference should also be made to the list on pp.13-14.

**Aberdeen, Lady Ishbel Maria (1857-1939) [DNB]**

Father: Dudley C. Marjoribanks; Mother: Isabel Hogg.

Educated by governesses and at private classes.

m. 1877, John Gordon, Marquis of Aberdeen; one daughter, three sons.

She supported her husband in his diplomatic and political career and was active in politics and social causes in her own right. She was a leading member of the NUWW and the WLF, and was the president of the International Council of Women. GBE 1931.

She published articles in political and religious magazines.

**121.**

Abraham, Mary Maud Edith [May], see Tennant

**Adams, Mrs. Agnes A.**

She was an organiser for the NFWW in Scotland, and undertook investigations into women's working conditions in WW1. She was a local councillor.

**214.**

**Adler, Nettie [Henrietta] (1868-1950)**

Father: Dr Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi; Mother: Rachel Joseph.

Educated at private school and classes.

Educational and social work. She was a colleague of G. Tuckwell, Clementina Black on the WIC. She was a school manager for the London School Board. Co-opted LCC Education Committee 1908-10; Public Health Committee 1931-34. Member for Central Hackney, LCC 1910-25 and 1928-31. Deputy Chairman LCC 1922-23. She was a member of the NUWW.

She was joint honorary secretary of the Committee on Wage Earning

Children 1899-1946 and served on a number of governing bodies including Hackney Downs School. JP in Juvenile Courts. Awarded CBE in 1934. She published articles on child labour; Jewish life and labour; women's work.

52., 184.

**Alkman, Miss Eliza Jane**  
66.

**Allan, Miss M.M.**  
Member of the NUWW.  
90., 101., 200.

**Ampthill, Lady Margaret (1874-1957)**  
Father: 6th Earl Beauchamp; Mother: Lady Mary Catherine Stanhope. Her sister was Lady Susan Gilmour [see below].  
Educated at home.  
m. 1894, Arthur O.V. Russell, 2nd Baron Ampthill; 1 daughter, 4 sons. She was educated to take a leading role in public life and in society. In 1911 she was appointed a lady in waiting to Queen Mary; she remained a close friend of the queen. After her marriage she supported her husband's career and was involved in a number of charitable causes, including the Red Cross. During WW1, she took over from K. Furse as head of women VADs. She was a member of the VAD Ladies Club.  
C.I. 1899; GBE 1918; GCVO 1946.  
81.

**Anderson, Dame Adelaide (1863-1936)** [DNB]  
Father: Alexander Gavin Anderson, a ship-broker; Mother: Blanche Emily Campbell.  
Educated at home in Australia in England; attended schools in France and Germany (Dresden); Queen's College, Harley Street; Girton College, 1883-87.  
Niece of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson.  
She lectured on philosophy and economics for the WCG, and was a member of the NUWW.  
In 1891 she was appointed chief woman clerk to the RC on Labour. She joined the Home Office women's factory inspectorate in 1894 and was appointed Principal Lady Inspector when May Tennant resigned in April 1896. At this time the work of the women's branch was re-defined giving it a less powerful role and removing its authority to bring prosecutions independently of the male superintending inspectors. Further reorganisations took place in 1908 and 1920 which diluted the women's department still further and Miss Anderson was opposed to the reforms on both occasions. In 1921 the position of Principal Lady Inspector was abolished and she was told that she must retire. In her retirement she travelled widely and represented the YWCA, Foreign Office and International Labour Office as an adviser to the Chinese and Japanese

governments until the war of 1933, serving on committees investigating child labour and factory conditions. She did similar work in Egypt. Awarded DBE 1921.

She wrote on labour and social conditions, including a history of the women's factory inspectorate.

**59., 80., 143., 176.**

**Andrews, Mrs E.**

Education - elementary.

Woman organiser of the Labour party for Wales and Monmouthshire.

Member of the WCG and a JP.

**122.**

**Archibald, Mrs Madeleine**

She was a licenciate of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons.

**171.**

**Arran, Mrs Margaret**

**96.**

**Ash, Cecily Ray (1876-1963)**

Father: E.P. Ash of Haileybury College.

Educated Grassendale School, Southbourne; Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford 1895-98.

She taught at the Godolphin school, Salisbury and at St Paul's Girls School.

She was head mistress of the Godolphin school from 1920 until 1935.

**101.**

**Askwith, Lady Ellen (d.1962)**

Father: Archibald Peel; Mother: Mary Ellen Palmer

Educated at home.

m. [1] 1890, Major Henry Graham, two sons [2] 1908, George Ranken

Askwith, created a Baron in 1911, one daughter.

She was one of YMCA lady presidents during WW1, and ran five canteens in the docks and a hotel. She started the National Kitchens scheme which was taken over by the Government. She joined the dockers' trade union as a member.

She published on social conditions, and was sub-editor of *The Onlooker*, a Conservative party journal.

**54., 169., 197.**

**Astor, Lady Nancy (1879-1964)** [DNB]

Father: Chiswell Dabney Langhorne; Mother: Nancy Witcher Keene.

Educated at day school in Richmond, Virginia, and at finishing school in New York.

m. [1] 1897, Robert Gould Shaw, divorced in 1903, 1 son; [2] 1906, Waldorf Astor [2nd Viscount], 4 sons, 1 daughter.

Conservative MP for Plymouth, Sutton, 1919-45 and the first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons. She was a member of the NUWW.

Made C.H. in 1937.

Published articles, and autobiography: *My Two Countries*, [1923].

126., 128., 172.

**Atholl**, Duchess of, Katharine Marjory Stewart-Murray (1874-1960) [DNB]

Father: Sir James Ramsay; Mother: Charlotte Fanning Stewart.

Educated Wimbledon High School and Royal College of Music.

m. 1899, John G. Stewart-Murray, Marquess of Tullibardine and 8th Duke of Atholl.

She was active in public service and was elected as a Conservative MP in 1923 - the first Scottish woman MP. She was the first woman to hold a ministerial post in a Conservative government as under-secretary of State to Board of Education.

She was an active supporter of anti-suffrage movement, but opposed exploitation of women. She resigned her seat of 1938 over her opposition to the Government's policy of appeasement. She was a friend of E.S. Haldane despite their political differences. She spoke on the dangers of Fascism and supported Republican cause in Spain, but opposed socialism in Britain. DBE, 1918.

She wrote books and articles on history and politics and an autobiography *Working Partnership* [1958] and *Hetherington* [1989].

42., 91., 123., 195., 209., 213.

**Atkin**, Mrs Marion

96.

**Baden-Powell**, Lady Olave St Clair (1889-1977) [DNB]

Father: Harold Soames; Mother: Katherine Hill.

Educated at home.

m. 1912, General Sir Robert Stephenson Smyth (later Lord) Baden-Powell (1857-1941).

She worked for the YMCA in France during WW1. She founded and organised Guide movement in 1916, worked and travelled extensively for the Guide and Scout movements. She settled in Kenya in 1938 where she was the president of the East African Women's League, and returned to England after her husband's death.

Published articles and books on guiding and travel.

65.

**Balnes**, Karolina Maud (b. 1869)

Father: Arthur George, an accountant; Mother: Maud Mary Miller.

Educated Clapham High School; University College, London, BA 1892; Girton 1901-2; MA London 1902.

She was a senior mistress at Clapham High School 1892-1901 and head mistress, Birkenhead High School 1902-14. She was H.M. Inspector of Schools, Board of Education 1914-28; seconded to Dept of Scientific & Industrial Research 1914-18.

114.

**Baker**, Mrs Hannah Jane [Jennie]

Father: Hugh William Elcum, a solicitor.

Educated North London Collegiate School; Diploma of Royal Sanitary Institute and National Health Society.

m. John Baker, Labour MP; one son.

She was a health lecturer, a member of Finchley UDC and vice president of Finchley Labour party. She was the honorary secretary of the National Council for Unmarried Mothers.

Published articles in *The Clarion*.

82., 96., 109.

**Balfour**, Lady Frances (1858-1931) [DNB]

Father: George Douglas Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll. Mother: Lady Elizabeth Leveson-Gower, daughter of 3rd Duke of Sutherland and cousin to Lord Frederick Cavendish.

Educated at home.

m. 1879, Eustace J.A. Balfour, youngest brother of Eleanor Sidgwick; 2 sons, 3 daughters.

She was active in social and philanthropic work; supported the Salvation Army; and was a promoter of women's rights. She joined the Central Committee for Women's Suffrage [which later became the NUWSS] in 1887, and spoke at many suffrage meetings and rallies. She was a member of the NUWW. She was friendly with the Webbs, Creightons, Snowdens, Spenders, Gladstones and had a keen interest in politics. She was a member of various libertarian societies, including the Freedom of Labour Defence, and one of the founders of the Women's Free Trade Union. She wrote on social questions, especially temperance and on politics, a number of biographies and an autobiography, *Ne Obliviscaris* [1930].

26., 65., 66.

**Bamber**, Mrs Mary (b.1874)

Elementary education.

She lived in Liverpool and was an organiser for the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, and a member of various trade boards.

96.

**Bannatyne, Miss K.V.**

She was a witness to the 1909 inquiry on children's employment (27.). She was a member of the NUWW.

89.

**Bannister, Mrs Sarah J.**

She was head mistress of the Stepney Pupil Teachers' Centre of the LCC in 1907 and principal of Moorlands Training College in 1915. She was a member of the Teachers' Guild of Great Britain and Ireland and of the NUWW.

11.

**Barbour, Miss C.M.**

Warden of Dundee Settlement for Social Workers, and member of the ESU.

98.

**Barbour, Mrs Mary**

She was a baillie in Glasgow in the 1920s and a member of the NUWW.

196.

**Barnett, Dame Henrietta Octavia (1851-1936) [DNB]**

Father: Alexander Rowland; Mother: Henrietta M.M. Ditges.

m. Canon Samuel A. Barnett, 1873

She did philanthropic social work and, with her husband, was involved in the settlement movement. She was the first woman to be nominated a woman guardian in 1875. In 1901, she founded a school in Hampstead which was named after her DBE, 1924. She was member of the NUWW. DBE, 1924.

She lectured and wrote on housing, poor law and social subjects, including an attack on women's failure to get involved in housing politics in the 1920s: 'Mothers and Housing', *Mothers in Council*, April 1926. She wrote a memoir of her husband, *Life, Work & Friends of Canon Barnett*, 1918.

7., 138.

**Barry, Miss Alice Frances (d.1951)**

Her father was G.W. Barry and she was the grand-daughter of Sir Charles Barry.

She was the medical superintendent of the child welfare work branch, Women's National Health Association, and a member of the Irish Medical committee.

119.

**Barton, Eleanor (1872-1960)**

Maiden name was Stockton; education elementary school.

m. 1894 Alfred Barton (d.1933), a librarian, subsequently an insurance agent, and a founder member of the Labour Representation Committee; 1 daughter, 1 son.

She and her husband were supporters of Edward Carpenter [1844-1929] who set up a socialist community at Millthorpe, and she was President of the Edward Carpenter Fellowship in 1948.

She was a member of the WCG in Sheffield, becoming secretary to the National Guild and to the International Women's Co-operative Guild in 1925, and was the first woman director of the National Co-operative Publishing Society; retired in 1937.

She was the Labour and Co-operative member for the Attercliffe Ward of Sheffield City Council 1919-1922, and she and her husband were the first married couple to sit together on the council. She stood for Parliament three times but was not elected. She was one of the first women to be appointed as a JP in Sheffield in 1920.

She was a member of the national executive of the Workers' Educational Association. She was a pacifist and joined the Peace Pledge Union. She worked for Anglo-Soviet friendship and trade. She was a member of NUWW, NFWW and gave evidence to a number of RCs and other Government committees.

She published a number of pamphlets on women and co-operation.  
66., 97., 130., 132., 158., 206., 211.

**Beavan, Margaret** (1877-1931)

Father: Jeffrey, an insurance clerk.

Educated by governess; Belvedere school; attended Holloway College, but left without completing her degree.

She did some paid teaching but mainly voluntary work - teaching and with the Liverpool Victoria Settlement. She was a member of the Kyrle Society and in 1906 became honorary secretary of its Invalid Children's Association, and worked to establish children's hospitals in Liverpool and mother and child welfare centres. She was particularly concerned with treatments for tuberculosis. She opened holiday home for tired mothers. She advocated and worked for the joint funding of such ventures between philanthropic and municipal bodies. She became a JP in 1920 and was elected to Liverpool City Council as a Liberal Coalitionist, and was Mayor of Liverpool 1927-28. She stood as a Conservative in Parliamentary election in 1929 but was defeated. She was the first woman to serve as a grand juror in Lancashire. She was involved with the establishment of the Probation Service, and supported the limited introduction of women police patrols; she belonged to the Magistrates' Association. Member of NUWW/NCW. Janet Campbell, Eleanor Rathbone, Gertrude Tuckwell and Clara Rackham were among her friends and colleagues. She was awarded the DBE.

She published articles on child welfare.

204.

**Bedford, Adeline Marie, Duchess of** (d.1920)

Father: Charles, 3rd Earl Somers; Mother: Virginia Pattle.

Educated at home.

m. 1876, George W.F.S. Russell, 10th Duke of Bedford.

She was involved in rescue work and was a member of the Associated



Workers' League and in 1905 was vice president of the Pimlico Ladies Association for the care of friendless girls. During WW1 she worked for the Red Cross and for the welfare of blind children. She supported prison reform in the UK [especially at Holloway] and abroad. She did not support the suffrage campaign but worked to improve women's social and educational position. She was a member of many committees and was known for her skills as a chairwoman and as a public speaker. She was a member of the NUWW.

Many of her speeches were published.

**70.**

**Beer, Mrs. Margrieta**

MA. She was a member of the Federation of University Women and of the NUWW.

**197.**

**Bell, Mrs Florence Nightingale Harrison (1865-1948)**

Father: Surgeon-Captain Thomas Harrison. He served in the Crimea at Scutari; she was named for Florence Nightingale who was her godmother. Educated at elementary school; Armstrong College, Newcastle - extension courses in English, History and Economics

m. 1896, Joseph N. Bell, union activist, and general secretary of the National Amalgamated Union of Labour from c.1905; one son.

She was a member of the ILP from its foundation and involved with its adult education programme, and taught in Newcastle, where she was honorary secretary of the Women's Suffrage Society in 1893. She was the first Socialist candidate for the Newcastle Board of Guardians in 1893. She and her husband were involved in the campaign for the election of Labour MPs; she was secretary of the Newcastle Labour Representation committee in 1900.

Her husband was elected Labour MP for Newcastle East in 1922 but died before he could take up his seat. She was very active in campaigning on his behalf, and after his death the NAUL asked her to stand in his place, but the National Executive over-ruled the union's right to nominate a candidate and the seat was offered to, and won by, Arthur Henderson. She was one of the first women to be elected to the Labour NEC in 1918 and served until 1925. She was a member of the WLL and on its executive committee, and a member of the NUWW. She was a director of the Newcastle Co-operative Society from 1902 and a member of the Newcastle and Northumbrian National Insurance Committees. She was vice president of the Standing Joint Committee of Women's Industrial Organisations; and of the Teachers' Labour League.

She published a number of articles in magazines.

**96., 152., 156., 165.**

**Bell-Richards, Mrs M.J.**

**83.**

**Bentham, Miss Ethel (1861-1931)**

Father: William Bentham; Mother: Mary Ann Hammond.

The family were Quakers.

Educated Alexandra School and College, Dublin; London School of Medicine for Women; Brussels and Paris.

She worked as a general practitioner in Newcastle upon Tyne and London.

She joined the Labour party in 1902 and was president of the WLL in 1913 and a member of the Fabian Women's group. She moved to London in 1909, where she shared a house with Susan Lawrence and Marion Phillips [see below]. She worked with Maud Pember Reeves [see below] on the research for the latter's book *Round about a pound a week*, [1913]. She was a member of the Kensington Borough Council and of the national executive of the Labour party. She was elected an MP in 1929. She was a member of the NUWSS and of the NUWW and a JP.

She published on social and economic conditions.

208.

**Beszyant, Miss S.L.**

101.

Birchenough, Lady M.C. see p.276a.

**Birrell, Olive Mary (b.1848)**

Father: Charles Morton Birrell, Baptist Minister; Mother: Harriet Jane Grey.

Her brother was Augustine Birrell MP, and the family were also related to Josephine Butler.

She kept house for her father after her mother's death and for her brother after the death of his first wife.

In 1915 she lived at 29 Allen House, Allen Street, Kensington and was a lady visitor to Holloway Prison.

She published short stories.

30.

**Black, Clementina Maria (1853-1922)** [DNB]

Father: David Black. Mother: Clara Maria Patten.

Educated at home.

As a young woman she was mainly involved in family duties and teaching.

In the 1880s she moved to London and continued teaching and private study; became involved with Marxist and Fabian socialists. In 1886 she became secretary to the WPPL, but resigned in 1889 to become one of the founders of the more radical Women's Trade Union Association. She was one of founders of the Women's Industrial Council, and in 1895 became editor of its journal, *Women's Industrial News*. She was also a member of the NUWW, the WLL and the NFWW. She campaigned against sweated industries and on behalf of low-paid workers. She was a vice-president of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, and believed in legislative rather than militant change.

She wrote stories, novels, and on social conditions.

96.

276a

**Birchenough, Lady Mabel Charlotte (d.1936)**

Father: Very Rev. George G. Bradley, Dean of Westminster; Mother: Marian Philpot.

m. Henry Birchenough, two daughters.

Her husband had business connections in southern Africa and during World War 1 she and her daughters ran welfare and convalescent schemes for Rhodesian soldiers.

She published novels and literary criticism.

She was a member of the Women's Advisory Committee, see p.358.

**Blair, Mrs C.**

Member of the ESU.

98.

**Bondfield, Margaret Grace (1873-1953)** [DNB]

Father: William; Mother: Ann Taylor.

Education, at elementary school and through Labour movement.

She worked as a pupil at the age of 13 and as a shop assistant at 14, and became assistant general secretary of National Union of Shop Assistants 1898-1908. She was involved in foundation of Women's Industrial Council. She investigated the working conditions of shopworkers for the WIC which resulted in the formation of the Anti-Sweating League and was also instrumental in the setting up of the DC on Truck Acts in 1906.

She was part of the Dilkes' circle in the 1890s, met Mary MacArthur in 1902, and was involved in the formation of the NFWW in 1906. She fought her first election in 1910 as Labour candidate for LCC in Woolwich and was a member, president and in 1909, chairman of the Adult Suffrage Society. Other members included Rosalind Vaughan Nash, Emily Hobhouse, Mary MacArthur, Margaret Macmillan, Mona Wilson, G. Tuckwell, M. Tennant, M. Llewellyn Davies. Her support for full adult suffrage brought her into conflict with other members of the WLL and the NUWSS.

She was a member of the WLL and a representative on the Standing Joint Council of Women's Industrial Organisations. She was the first women member of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC. When the NFWW was incorporated as the Women's Section of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers in 1920, she was appointed chief woman officer, resigning in 1938.

She was a close friend and colleague of F.N.H. Bell. She attended a number of international conferences as a British labour representative, and was one of the first women J.P.s. She stood first as ILP candidate and was elected a Labour MP 1923; was Parliamentary Secretary at the Treasury 1924, and Minister of Labour 1929-1931.

She wrote articles on social and labour matters and an autobiography, *A Life's Work* [1949].

54., 69., 156., 186.

**Booth, Mrs Florence F. Booth (1861-1957)**

Father: Dr Isben Soper.

m. 1882, William Bramwell Booth, son of the founder of the Salvation Army; five daughters, two sons.

She joined the Salvation Army during her coming out season in 1880, giving up society life; that and her marriage were opposed by her family. She was made a commissioner of the army in 1886 and was active in its internal reform as well as in its social and rescue work. She campaigned with Josephine Butler and W.T. Stead on child protection legislation. She was put in charge of the Salvation Army's evangelical work and training. She supported women's emancipation.

66.

**Bosanquet, Helen (1860-1925)** [DNB]

Father: Rev. John Dendy; Mother: Sarah Beard.

Educated at home and at Newnham College.

m. 1895, Bernard Bosanquet.

She was district secretary of the Shoreditch branch of the COS and a member of the London Ethical Society. She worked as a translator and writer. She was a member of the NUWW.

She wrote extensively on poverty and social work.

17.

**Bramley, Mrs Mary**

m. 1898, Fred (1874-1925), trades union leader; one daughter, one son.

96.

**Branford, Mrs Sybella (d.1927)**

neé Gurney; her father was a clergyman and her family were from Cornwall.

m. c1906, Victor, an architect.

She attended Royal Holloway College 1887, and later Oxford. At Oxford she became involved with the Labour Co-partnership Movement, held several positions on its executive and edited its journal. She was one of the founders of the Rural Co-Partnership housing association. She was also involved in other town planning and garden city associations and in the Sociological Society.

She published on housing reform and social conditions.

97.

**Breese, Mrs Janet**

Father Rev. Paul M. Stedman.

m. 1894, Charles Edward, MP.

Member of the North Wales Nursing Association.

122.

**Brereton, Katherine Blanche (1861-1930)**

Father: Captain Shovell Henry; Mother: Emma White.

She devoted herself to local philanthropic work combined with domestic duties until 1890 when she trained as a Lady Pupil nurse at Guy's Hospital, 1890-1891. She was staff nurse at Wirral Children's Hospital 1891-1892; and trained in midwifery. She was a sister at Guy's Hospital 1893-Oct 1899, when she left to care for her mother after her father's death. She continued her connection with the Hospital as a member of Guy's Hospital Past and Present Nurses' League - M Fawcett was an honorary member. In 1900 she was asked to join the Nursing Section of the RAMC in South Africa where she helped to form the first Imperial Yeomanry Hospital at Doelfontein. She worked there and at Pretoria and Elandsfontein during March 1900-July 1901. After her work on the Concentration Camps Inquiry she was awarded the South African War medal and the Royal Red Cross 1902. She returned to South Africa in 1903 with M. Fawcett to promote better relations between

the Boers and the British. After this she returned to the family estate in Norfolk which she managed from 1908 until her death. She enjoyed riding and hunting and was patron of the living of Briningham. She was a suffragist and was president of the Holt Suffrage Society. She was a member of the local council and of various committees, particularly during WW1. She was awarded the MBE, and became a JP in 1922. She was a member of the Victoria League and the NUWW.

13.

**Bretherton, Mrs Margaret**

Member of the NUWW.

66.

**Bridgeman, Dame Caroline (1872-1961)**

Father Hon. Cecil Parker; Mother Rosamond Longley.

Educated privately.

m. 1895, W.C. Bridgeman, Conservative MP who became Home Secretary, and First Lord of the Admiralty; three sons.

She began public work to support her husband's political ambitions and was a member of the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association, of which she was vice-chairman in 1917. She was elected chairman of the Women's Branch of the National Unionist Association in 1921 and became the first woman chairman of National Union of Conservative and Unionist organisations in 1926. She was active within the party as a promoter of women's suffrage. When her husband resigned from Parliament in 1928 with severe arthritis, she was asked if she would consider standing in his place, but declined.

She worked in the Ministry of National Service Women's Department at St Ermins during 1917; and was chairman of the Women's War Agricultural Committee in Shropshire. She was a member of the NUWW. She was a member of the House of Laity of the Church Assembly and in 1928 was asked to become a Member in Charge of the Prayer Book Measure.

In 1927 she was appointed a member of the British delegation to the League of Nations Assembly. Governor of BBC 1935-39. She chaired a variety of committees concerning women's war work and hospitals.

Awarded DBE 1924.

She wrote political pamphlets, articles for religious and women's journals, and leaflets in support of Prayer Book reforms.

193.

**Brock, Dame Madeline Dorothy (1886-1969)**

Father: G.W.F. Brock; Mother: Eliza Jane Wilkins.

Educated Bromley High School; Girton College.

Held a research studentship at Girton 1908-10. Classics mistress at King Edward's High School, Birmingham, 1910-17. Chairman of the committee of the Association of Head Mistresses 1927-29 and its president 1933-35. She was a member of many Government committees during the 1930s and

1940s, including the Consultative Committee on Education, 1931-40.  
Published on classics and education.

**106.**

W.L. Brodie Hall, see Hall.

**Bruce, Miss**  
**50.**

**Bryant, Sophie (1850-1922) [DNB]**

Father: Rev. William Alexander Willock; Mother, daughter of J.P. Morris of Skreen Castle.

Born in Ireland; educated by her father and a governess. In 1863 the family moved to England and in 1866 she won the Arnott Scholarship to Bedford College.

m. 1869, Dr William Hicks Bryant. After his death in 1870 she began teaching; she also supported her mother and nieces and began studying for her BA in Mental & Moral Science & Mathematics which she was awarded in 1881. In 1884 she was the first woman to be awarded a DSc by the University of London, in Physiology, Logic and Ethics.

From 1875 she worked for Frances Buss at the North London Collegiate School teaching maths and German, and became its head mistress in 1895, retiring in 1918. She was President of the Association for Headmistresses 1903-05; and of the Executive Committee of the first International Congress on Moral Education in 1908-09. She was active in a number of political causes, principally Irish Home Rule and Women's rights. She was a founder of the English Home Rule Propagandist Organisation; president of the Hampstead Suffrage Society and a member of the WLF and the NUWW. She was a keen alpinist (a favoured pursuit of the intelligentsia at this time) and died in a climbing accident in Switzerland.

She published extensively in periodicals and was the author of a number of books on education, Ireland, religion and ethics, and textbooks on mathematics.

**2., 23., 33.**

**Burgwin, Mrs Elizabeth Miriam (c.1851-1940)**

She began teaching as a pupil teacher in Southwark and held her first classes in a van yard. She became headmistress of Orange Street School, Southwark and was subsequently superintendent of London schools for physically and mentally defective children. She was a trustee and the treasurer of the Orphans Benevolent Fund. Awarded the OBE. She gave evidence to a number of Government enquiries. She was a member of the NUWW and the Anti-Suffrage League and an executive member of the English National Union of Teachers.

She wrote articles on education.

**10., 47., 152.**

**Cadbury, Mrs Geraldine (d.1941)**

Father: Alfred Southall.

m. 1891, Barrow Cadbury, 2 daughters, 1 son.

She was a Quaker. She studied the problems of juvenile crime and after visiting the USA was partly responsible for founding Birmingham Juvenile Court in 1905, based on a court in Chicago, and was a chairman of the Juvenile Court Panel. She also helped to set up a model remand home in Birmingham in 1910. She worked for the Birmingham Maternity hospital and was involved in the adult education movement. In 1937 she became a member of the Probation Training Board. She was a member of Birmingham City Council 1919-24. Awarded DBE 1937. She was a member of the NUWW.

She wrote on social conditions.

185.

**Calrns, Miss M.E.**

NUWW.

196.

**Campbell, Agnes (c.1878-1965)**

Educated at St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Cheltenham Ladies College; University of London, c.1900.

She worked at the Ministry of Agriculture in WW1 with Sir Robert Greig. She was largely responsible for founding the Scottish Rural Institute and was associated with the Carnegie Trust for which she wrote a report on public baths and wash houses, 1918. She was a member of the NUWW. After the war she became headmistress of a girls' school in Jamaica. During WW2 she lectured on psychology to the RAF.

She wrote on education and social issues.

91., 117.

**Campbell, Dr Helen**

102.

**Campbell, Dr Janet Mary (1877-1954) [DNB]**

Father: George Campbell; Mother: Letitia Rowe.

Educated Brighton High School; Germany; London School of Medicine for Women.

m. 1934, Michael Heseltine (1886-1952).

She was a doctor at Royal Free Hospital; then Senior RMO at Belgrave Hospital for Children. She became Assistant Medical Officer for the LCC and joined Government service as Chief Woman Medical Officer at Board of Education in 1908. She joined the Ministry of Health [1919] as head of Maternity and Child Welfare Department resigning in 1933.

She was a member of many Government and international committees.

DBE 1924; JP.

She published on maternal and child welfare, and on medical training.

66., 104., 203., 206.



**Cashmore, Hilda (1876-1942)**

Father: Samuel.

Educated at Cheltenham Ladies College; Somerville College 1899-1902. She began her career as a teacher in Chesterfield and in 1906 became a history lecturer at a training college attached to Bristol University. She was the warden of the Bristol University Settlement. In WW1 she worked with the Friends' War Victims' Relief committee in France and Poland. After the war she went to Manchester as the warden of the Manchester University Settlement. She left in 1934 to set up a Quaker ashram at Rasulia in India. She was a friend of Violet Markham.

59.

**Cassle, Mrs Ethel**

She held a medical degree.

203.

**Cavendish, Lucy (Lady Frederick Cavendish) (1841-1925)**

Father: George William, 4th Baron Lyttelton; Mother: Mary Glynne, the sister of Catherine Glynne who married William Gladstone, and the two families were very close.

Educated at home, and became a Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria in 1863 at a salary of £400 a year.

m. 1864, Lord Frederick Cavendish, second son of the Duke of Devonshire. She had a strong interest in politics, and initially supported the Tory party but moved towards the Liberals when Gladstone shifted his allegiance to that party. Her Liberal politics were confirmed after her marriage; her husband was radical in his views and advocated household suffrage before most other Liberals and Whigs, although neither supported female suffrage. Despite the assassination of her husband by Fenians in 1882 she remained in favour of Home Rule.

She was involved in charitable work as an executive member of various bodies rather than in more active ways, with a strong interest in the improvement of education for girls. She supported the Old Vic; Yorkshire Ladies Council for Education, of which she was a President; the Girls' Public Day School Trust; the Temperance Movement; St Mary's College, Paddington; associations for the support of Christians in Armenia; NUWW. She was a devout churchgoer and a strong proponent of religious education in schools.

She wrote articles on poverty, education and labour matters.

2.

**Chamberlain, Beatrice Mary (1862-1918)**

Father: Joseph; Mother: Harriet Kenrick.

She was active in social and political work, and helped her brother, Austen, in his political campaigns. During WW1 she worked for the Red Cross. She supported greater representation of women in political parties and was one of the first women to be elected to the executive of her local Unionist party. She was a leading member of the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform

Association. She was a school board member for many years, and a school manager. She was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Advisory Council and of the NUWW.

99.

**Chamberlain, Ivy Muriel (d.1941)**

Father: Col. H. Lawrence Dundas.

m. 1906, Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937) one daughter, two sons.

She supported her husband's political career and helped with campaigning.

In 1925 she accompanied him to Locarno for the peace conference and was awarded the GBE for her services there. She was awarded the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

54.

**Churchill, Lady Clementine Spencer (1885-1977) [DNB]**

Father: Sir Henry Hozier; Mother: Lady Henrietta Blanche Ogilvy.

Educated at home; Berkhamsted Girls' School; the Sorbonne.

m.1908, Sir Winston Churchill(1874-1965). 4 daughters, 1 son.

She held a number of honorary positions and organised canteens for munitions workers in WW1 for the YMCA. She was on the executive committee of the WLF and one of its vice-presidents before WW1. She gave especially active support to her husband during WW2. She was chairman of the Red Cross Aid to Russia Fund 1939-46 and awarded the order of the Red Banner of Labour in 1945. Created GBE in 1946, and was awarded a number of honorary degrees.

36.

**Churton, Miss Annette**

She was a member of the Rural Housing Association, the Association of Women House Property Managers and the NUWW.

97.

**Clapham, Lilian M. (c.1871-1935)**

She worked at the Women's University Settlement at Southwark, had practical experience of the millinery and dressmaking business, and became a civil servant. She was involved in the setting up of the women's side of employment exchanges. In 1917 was seconded from the Ministry of Labour to be Principal Officer, Women's Section of National Service Department; returned to the Ministry of Labour as a staff clerk until her retirement 1930.

In her youth she had been a keen hockey player and had captained the English team in 1899. She was involved with WIC and contributed a report to WIN [Jan 1910] on Trade Schools for Girls in Switzerland and Paris which she had written in Jan 1909 and was involved with the movement to promote trade schools for girls in Britain. She was a member of the Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association. She was a friend of K. Furse and of Caroline Spurgeon.

81.

**Clark, Letitia S.**  
102.

**Claypon, Dr Janet Lane**  
Dean of Household and Social Science Dept, King's College for Women  
c.1918.  
She was a member of the WIC and the NUWW.  
96., 102., 118.

**Cleghorn, Miss Isabel (d.1922)**  
born in Rochester, Kent. Educated at elementary school, North Shields;  
Pupil Teacher, Elementary School, South Shields; Stockwell Training  
College.  
She became headmistress of Heeley Bank Council School, Sheffield. She  
was involved with a number of local and national committees connected  
with educational matters and was president of Sheffield Teachers' and  
Head Teachers' Associations. She was a member of the executive of the  
National Union of Teachers for 24 years and was its first woman president  
1911-12. Member of NUWW/NCW and of the Victoria League.  
She published textbooks and educational pamphlets.  
23., 33., 45., 57., 90.

**Clough, Blanche Athene (1861-1960)**  
Father: Arthur Hugh, a poet; Mother Blanche Smith.  
She was a cousin of F. Nightingale and B. Bodichon. Her aunt, Anne  
Jemima Clough, was one of the founders of Newnham and its first principal.  
Educated privately; Hendon Girls' School and Newnham College.  
She was a tutor at Newnham, 1896-1920; vice-principal 1917-20; and  
principal 1920-23. She was a member of the governing bodies of a number  
of girls' schools and supported the Women's University Settlement in  
Southwark. She supported women's suffrage, belonged to the National  
Society for Women's Service; the Women's Employment Federation, where  
she worked with Ray Strachey and Phillipa Fawcett; and was a member of  
NUWW.  
She wrote articles and a biography of her aunt *A Memoir of Anne Jemima  
Clough* [1897].  
111.

**Cochrane, Constance Amelia (c.1850-1936)**  
Father: R.A. Cochrane; Mother: Julia Onslow.  
Educated privately.  
She was a Sunday school teacher. She supported the improvement of rural  
housing and was a pioneer of the boarding-out movement. She was a  
member of NUWW; and of the Sanitary Institute. She was chairman of  
Parish Meeting, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, c. 1901 and a member of the  
south Cambridgeshire rural district council and the Cambridgeshire county  
council. She was a JP, member of WNLA and honorary treasurer of Rural

Housing Association. She lectured on rural housing; gave a paper on the subject to the Pan-Anglican Conference in 1908.

She wrote articles and papers on housing.

39.

**Cockerton, Mrs Jennie E.**

96.

**Cohen, Mrs Leonora**

She lived in Leeds. She was secretary of Leeds WSPU and served sentences in 1911 in Holloway and in Armley, Leeds. She became one of the first women JPs.

152.

**Collet, Clara Elizabeth (1860-1948)**

Father: Collet Dobson; Mother: Jane Sloan

Educated at North London Collegiate School; University College, London. She was an assistant Mistress Wyggeston Girls' School, Leicester 1878-85, and was president of the Association of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools 1891.

Her father was interested in social reform and was a close friend of G.J. Holyoake; he was also friendly with Marx and Engels. She knew Sophie Bryant who had been a member of staff at the North London Collegiate during Collet's schooldays.

She worked for Charles Booth as a researcher for *Life and Labour of the People in London* [1889-1903].

She was appointed an assistant commissioner to the RC on Labour in 1892. She joined the Board of Trade as Labour Correspondent in 1893, became Senior Investigator in 1903. From 1917 to 1920 she worked at the Ministry Labour, and between 1921 and 1932 she served on a number of Trade Boards. She was a member of the WTUL, WCG and NUWW.

She was a Member of the Council of the Royal Statistical Society 1919-35, and of the Royal Economic Society 1920-1941. She was a Fellow of University College, London, and a Governor of Bedford College.

She wrote articles and reports on the economic position of women; and also some memoirs and history.

80.

**Colman, Mrs Dorothea**

She was a vice-president of the WLF and a member of the NUWW.

129.

**Colville, Lady Cynthia (1884-1968)**

Father: Robert, marquess of Crewe; Mother: Sybil Marcia Graham, d.1887.

Her stepmother was Lady Margaret Crewe [see below]

Educated at home and at Royal College of Music 1902.

m. 1908, the Hon. George Colville, 3 sons.

She was brought up in a Whig family with a strong interest in politics. Her

husband's family were Tories. She was friendly with the Lyttelton family through Lucy [later Masterman] and Hilda [later Grenfell] daughters of Katharine and Neville Lyttelton.

She had an extensive involvement in charity and philanthropic work: Shoreditch COS; Personal Service Association; schemes for mother and child welfare; Women Public Health Officers' Association, of which she was President in 1930. She was lady in waiting to Queen Mary 1923-53. She was asked to stand as the Liberal candidate for Shoreditch at the 1924 election, but refused because of her husband's membership of the Conservative Party. She had a number of friends in the Labour Party including G. Tuckwell who proposed her as a JP in 1929 when she became a member of the Bench at Hanover Square and subsequently the East London Juvenile Court at Toynbee Hall. Awarded DBE in 1953. Wrote pamphlets and an autobiography *Crowded Life*, 1963.

206.

**Cons, Emma (1838-1912)** [DNB]

Father: Frederick Cons, a piano-maker; Mother: Esther Goodair.

Educated at Gower Street Art School and Mrs Hill's School.

She worked as an illuminator of manuscripts for Ruskin, and tried to establish a business as a watch engraver. She knew Octavia Hill through the Ladies Art Guild and worked with her on housing projects. She was a teetotaler and campaigned for moral reform, advocating the establishment of working-class coffee houses to replace pubs. She founded the Old Vic in 1880; was Vice-President of the London Society for Women's Suffrage; an executive member of the Women's Liberal Federation; and was one of the first three women to be elected to the LCC in 1899.

9.

**Conti, Italia (1874-1946)**

Father: Luigi, a singer; Mother: Emilia Mary Castle.

Educated Warden Court, Haywards Heath; Kensington Academy.

She worked as an actress and founded a school for acting in 1911. She was involved in various forms of voluntary social work.

She wrote plays.

115.

**Conway, Essie Ruth (c.1862-1934)**

Educated Corngreave School, Cradley Heath, Staffs; Pupil Teacher, Upper Park Street School, Liverpool; Lincoln Training College.

Assistant Mistress, Upper Park Street Board School; Head Mistress Ashfield Street Board School and Cling Road Board School; and Principal, Tiber Street Council School Liverpool.

She was a member of the NUT from 1910 and President 1918-19; of the Teacher's Registration Council from its formation in 1912; the Burnham Committee; and the Secondary Schools Examination Council. She was a president of Liverpool Teachers' Association; the Lancashire County

Association of NUT, and a chairman of Liverpool Women's Citizens' Association.

CBE 1925. JP.

113., 127., 153., 168., 188., 201.

**Cottrell, Mrs Mary E.**

She was a director of the Co-operative Wholesale Society and a member of the NUWW, the Consumers' Council and of the Empire Marketing Board.

She was a JP.

95., 133., 142.

**Courtney, Mrs Janet E. (1866-1954)**

Father: Rev. George Hogarth.

Educated at home and at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

m. 1911, William L. Courtney.

She was a teacher at Cheltenham Ladies College, but became a clerk on the RC on Labour 1892-94 and then joined the Bank of England as its first superintendent of women clerks. In 1906 she helped to start the Times Book Club and in 1910 she joined the editorial staff of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In WW1 she was an adviser on staff welfare to the Ministry of Munitions. After the war she was the acting editor of the *Fortnightly Review*. She was a member of the executive committee of the Carnegie Trust from 1913.

She published articles and memoirs, including her autobiography *Recollected in Tranquillity* [1926].

194.

**Crabble, Miss Ada M.**

80., 117.

**Creighton, Mrs Louise (1850-1936)**

Father: Robert von Glehn, a merchant; Mother: Agnes Duncan.

Educated at home.

m. 1872, Mandell Creighton (1843-1901) who became Bishop of London. 3 sons, 4 daughters.

In addition to running a household and extensive parish work, she was a professional writer on history and social subjects. She was a friend of Beatrice Webb and Kathleen Lyttelton. At Cambridge she initiated discussion group for women of which E. Sidgwick was also a member. She was a founder of NUWW and its first president. She was a frequent lecturer, including series given at LSE on 'Economics of the Household'. She was opposed to female suffrage but 'recanted' at same time as B. Webb. She was involved in the movement to organise women's national work during WW1, and helped to set up the NUWW Women's Patrols.

29., 47. 66.

**Crewe, Lady Margaret Etrenne Hannah (1881-1967)**

Father: Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery; Mother: Hannah de

**Rothschild**

Educated at home.

m. 1899, as his second wife, Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes, became Marquess of Crewe in 1911. One daughter, Lady Mary Evelyn Hungerford.

She was a member of a leading Liberal family and was a well-known political hostess, supporting her husband's political and diplomatic career. She was active in the Liberal party, a vice-president of the WLF, and was president and chairman of the Liberal Society Council. She held various voluntary positions, worked and was friendly with V. Markham, M. MacArthur and M. Tennant, especially during WW1. She was the president of the Mary Macarthur holiday home for working women. She was one of the first women JPs.

She published poetry and articles.

53., 54., 105.

**Crout, Miss Mabel (1890-1984)**

She was a member of Woolwich Borough Council from 1919-64, and its mayor 1936-37. She was a member of the LCC from 1949-55 and of the London Borough of Greenwich and an Alderman, 1964-71. She was made a JP in 1920. DBE, 1965.

142.

**Crowthier, Miss Lena**

Superintendent, South Wales Nursing Association.

122.

**Cunnington, Miss B.M.**

In 1915 she was an inspector at Board of Education. She was a member of the NUWW.

80., 96.

**Davles, Mrs Alice Huws**

82.

**Davies, Miss A.M.**

Honorary secretary of the North Wales Nursing Association.

122.

**Davies, Miss Florence Rose (b.1882)**

Educated in elementary schools and trained as a teacher.

She was a member of the ILP from 1906 and of the WCG. She was a member of Aberdare district and Glamorgan county councils and of the Aberdare education committee 1909-20 and of the Aberdare Maternity Committee. She was a governor of the University of Wales.

122.

**Davies, Miss H.M.**  
114.

Deane, Lucy, see Streatfeild

**Denman, Lady Gertrude Mary (1884-1954)** [DNB]  
Father: W.D. Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray; Mother: Annie Cass.  
Educated privately.  
m. 1903, Thomas, 3rd baron Denman; 1 daughter, 1 son.  
She held a number of voluntary and honorary positions. She lived in Australia between 1911 and 1914 when her husband was Governor-General. When they returned to England she became chairman of the sub-committee of the Agricultural Organisation Society from which Women's Institutes were formed. She was chairman of the National Federation of the WI 1917-46.  
She was an Assistant Director of the Women's Branch of the Food Production Department of the Department of Agriculture in WW1 [see M. Talbot and E. Lyttelton], and was responsible to the Ministry of Agriculture for the organisation of the Women's Land Army in WW2. She belonged to the WNLF of which she was a vice-president, and to the NUWW. DBE in 1933 and GBE 1951.  
147.

Deverell, Edith Mary - see Marvin

**Dickie, Mrs Marie L.**  
She was a member of Bristol WLF. She was Inspector of Boarded Out Children for the LGB in Ireland in 1909, and National Insurance Commissioner for Ireland. She was a member of the NUWW and of the Irish Public Health Council.  
38., 119.

**Dickson, Isabel Anne (1872-1922)**  
Father: John Farquhar, farmer; Mother: A. Macdonald.  
Educated at home; St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Girton.  
She was acting principal, Women's College, University of Sydney 1901-12; and at Bedford College. In 1905 she was appointed one of the first woman inspectors at the Board of Education; and became the first woman inspector of a Training College. She was seconded to Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1914-19. In 1919 she was first woman to be Assistant Secretary of the University Branch, Board of Education. OBE 1918.  
She published in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* and the *Folklore Journal*.  
90.

**Dideridge, Mrs**  
96.



**Douglas, Mrs Anne I.**  
117., 192.

**Douglas, M.A. (d.1941)**  
Father: Canon Douglas of Salwarpe; Mother was sister of Bishop William Walsham How.  
Educated at Lincoln Training College in the 1880s and Westfield College.  
She taught at a school run by Alice Ottley at Worcester. In 1890 she became headmistress of the Godolphin School, Salisbury where she worked for 30 years, retiring in 1919. She was a member of the Head Mistresses Association.  
She published on education.  
45., 57.

**Doyle, Mrs Margaret**  
An assistant teacher and a member of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation.  
100.

**Drake, Mrs**  
50.

**Duncan, Mrs A.C.**  
171.

**Durham, Frances Hermia (1873-1948)**  
Father: Arthur Edward, surgeon; Mother: Mary Ellis.  
Educated at private school in London and Rugby; Notting Hill High School [contemporary with Clara Tabor (later Rackham)]; Girton 1892-96.  
She worked as a historical researcher with Professor Maitland and Hubert Hall, 1897-1900 and then as a social worker at the Women's University Settlement, Southwark. She was co-founder and co-secretary of the Southwark Registry and Apprenticeship committee 1900-07. She organised technical education classes for women at the LCC from 1907 and was on the LCC education committee 1907-1915. She was chief woman inspector of the Unemployment Department of the Board of Trade 1915-16, and at the Ministry of Labour 1916-18. She was Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour 1918-33 - the first woman in the Civil Service to reach this level. At the end of WW1 she was put in charge of the Women's Training Department of the Ministry of Labour until the department was dissolved. After her retirement she was a member of Devon County Council Education Committee 1934-39. CBE, 1919.  
She published on labour matters; and 'The relation of the Crown to trade under James 1' [Trans. R. Hist. Soc. 1899].  
25., 33., 45., 59., 77., 80., 129.

**Elveden, Lady Gwendolen Florence Mary (1881-1966)** [DNB]

Father: William Hillier, 4th Earl of Onslow; Mother: Florence Coulston Gardner.

Educated at home and in private classes.

m. 1903, Viscount Rupert E.C.L. Guinness, became second Earl of Iveagh, 1927; three daughters, one son.

She was involved in various philanthropic causes and was active in Conservative politics and temporarily replaced Caroline Bridgeman as chairman of Women's Unionist Association in 1921 and in later years was chairman in her own right; she was a chairman of the Women's Advisory Committee of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations. She succeeded her husband as MP for Southend in 1927 and held the seat until 1935.

**107., 213.**

**Emmott, Lady Mary Gertrude (1866-1954)**

Her father was John William Lees, a cotton manufacturer of Oldham, a former Quaker; Mother: Elizabeth Chadwick.

Educated privately at home.

m. 1887, Alfred Emmott, a Quaker, created a Baron 1911; 2 daughters.

Her involvement with charitable work was initially connected with her husband's work as MP for Oldham. They were friendly with the Runcimans, Harcourts, and Dilkes. Both were in favour of women's suffrage and she worked with the NUWSS. She was honorary treasurer of the Stansfeld Trust. She and her husband were involved with the Congo Reform Association which led to her appointment as an organiser for relief for Belgian refugees during the early years of WW1, and they were foundation members of the Anglo-Belgian Union in 1918. She was a member of the executive of the NUWW and was one of its presidents.

She became a JP in 1920, serving in the Children's Court at Brixton, and in March 1921 was appointed one of the trustees of the National Relief Fund grant of £100,000 for Elderly Educated Women. She worked for the support of the NSPCC and the London Council for the Welfare of Women and Girls. In 1922 she stood for election to Parliament as a Liberal in her husband's former Oldham constituency. She was a member of the Victoria League from its foundation in 1902. OBE 1951.

**79., 96., 97., 138., 178.**

**Enfield, Alice Honora (1882-1935)**

Father: Ernest William.

Born in Nottingham. Educated at St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Somerville College.

She worked as a teacher and a researcher in history until 1913. Between 1913-17 she worked for the NFWW and on the administration of the national insurance acts. She became private secretary to Margaret Llewellyn Davies in 1917. She was a pacifist and a founder of the International Co-operative Women's Guild; general secretary of the WCG, 1922-26.

She published on co-operation and a biography.

**96., 102.**

**Enright, Dorothy (c.1889-1932)**

She taught at a girls' school in Rotherham and became principal of the Cambridge School of Arts, Crafts and Technology in 1924, the first woman to hold such a post. She worked to promote further education.

114.

**Esplin, Miss A.E.**

Section leader in Ministry of Labour Training Department 1918-20.

MBE 1920.

93.

**Evans, Miss Annie Lloyd (d.1938)**

Father: John; Mother: Annie.

Educated Warwick High School; St Andrew's University, which she was one of the first women to attend.

She worked in teacher training colleges in Dublin and London, becoming principal of Furzedown College. She was a member of various educational associations.

207.

**Evans, Ellen (1891-1953)**

Father: John; Mother: Ellen.

Educated Rhondda Secondary School; University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

She was a teacher of Welsh language and literature at the Glamorgan Training College from 1915 and became its principal in 1928. She was a member of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and of the University court and council of University College of Wales.

She published children's books and on education, in Welsh and English.

187.

**Eve, Lady Fanny Jean Trustram (d.1934)**

Father: Rev. J.R. Turing.

m. 1893, Sir Herbert Trustram Eve; one daughter, three sons.

She held many voluntary and honorary positions and was active in local politics, especially in encouraging women to join political parties. She was made a JP in 1928. She was elected to the LCC as Conservative councillor for Hackney in 1919 and served there until 1925 when she was elected councillor for South Kensington where she remained until 1931. She was the first woman to chair an LCC committee. She was chairman of the managing committee of Bow Road Open Air school from 1920-1934. She worked in the Conservative party and was chairman of the Mid-Bedfordshire Unionist Association 1917-21 and between 1917 and 1928 the chairman of the Conservative Women's Reform Association. She was a member of the NUWW/NCW and its president 1931-33, and a member of the National Assembly of the Church of England, 1925-30.

96., 169., 205.

**Eve, Miss Margaret**

She was a member of the London School Board and was involved in setting up evening continuation schools in London. She was a member of the WNLA and the NUWW.

9.

**Everard, Lady Sylvia Priscilla (d.1935)**

Father: William Humphreys.

m. 1873, Col. Sir Nugent (d.1929); one son.

She was a founder member, with Lady Aberdeen [see above], of the Irish Women's National Health Association.

34.

**Falthfull, Lilian Mary (1865-1952)**

Father Francis G., clerk to Merchant Taylors Co; her mother was a writer.

Educated at home and at private classes; Somerville 1883-87.

She was secretary to the principal of Somerville 1887-8; Mistress, Oxford High School 1888-9; Lecturer in English Literature, Language, and History, Royal Holloway College 1889-94; Vice Principal, Kings' College, London, Women's Dept, 1894-1907, and Fellow 1904; Principal, Cheltenham Ladies' College 1907-22.

JP. She was a member of the NUWW and did voluntary work in Gloucestershire.

She published literary works and memoirs, including autobiography, *In the House of my Pilgrimage*, 1924.

116.

**Falconer, Ada A.**

Father: Robert Kennedy.

m. James (d. 1931).

She was a member of WLF executive committee for Scotland and a vice-president.

21.

**Fanner, Miss Grace (1871-1958)**

Father: Henry; Mother: Mary Nightingale.

Educated Wimbledon High School; Newnham 1891-95.

She taught at various schools and was head mistress of Sale High School 1904-07 and the first head mistress of Putney County Secondary School, 1907-34.

She was a member of the Personal Service League and on the councils of several colleges. She was a member of the Kingston-on-Thames education committee. She was president of the Association of Head Mistresses in 1921 and a member of the Cambridge University Women's Appointments Board 1933-36.

153.

**Fardell, Miss Flora E.**

OBE

152.

**Fawcett, Mrs Millicent Garrett (1847-1929)** [DNB]

Father: Newson Garrett; Mother: Louisa Dunnell.

Educated at home and at Miss Browning's School at Blackheath.

m. 1867, Henry Fawcett, (1833-1884), one daughter, Philippa, [see below].

She was a leading member and president of the NUWSS - worked for women's suffrage through constitutional methods; Frances Balfour was a close colleague. She was active in various women's organisations including the NUWW; she was a member of Newnham College Council 1881-1909. She was a member of the Victoria League. DBE 1925. She wrote and published on political economy, women's rights and suffrage matters.

13.

**Fawcett, Miss Philippa (1868-1948)**

Father: Henry; Mother: Millicent Garrett Fawcett.

Educated Clapham High School; Bedford College and University College [where she was appointed a Fellow in 1918], London; Newnham 1887-91 where she became 1st woman to be Senior Wrangler. She was an Associate of Newnham 1893-1906; 1907-22; Associate Fellow 1917-19; Member of Council 1905-15.

She worked as a lecturer in mathematics at Newnham 1892-1902. She accompanied her mother to South Africa in 1901 and from 1902-1915 worked in the Transvaal Education Department organising the elementary schools' system. She was Chief Assistant to LCC Director of Education 1905-24. She also worked with her mother in the suffrage movement as well as other forms of social work, including the Women's Employment Federation, where Blanche Clough was a colleague. She was a member of the NUWW.

She published on mathematics.

103., 113.

**Fergusson, Mrs A.A.**

Member of the ESU.

98.

**Forrester-Paton, Hon. Mary Emma Louise (1885-1974)**

Father, Thomas Shaw, first Baron Craigmyle; Mother: Elsie Stephen Forrest.

Educated at St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Edinburgh Ladies College; Somerville College 1904-07.

m. 1910, Alexander Forrester-Paton; one daughter and four sons.

She was an active member of United Free Church of Scotland and of the BWTA. From 1912-1936 she was president of the Scottish Women's Friendly Society.

216.

**Foulkes-Smith, Mrs Annie**

Member of the WCG.

**97.**

**Fox, Dave Evelyn Emily Marion (1874-1955)** [DNB]

Father: Richard; Mother: Emily Gordon.

Educated at home; at high school in Morges, Switzerland; Somerville College, 1898.

She worked at the Women's University Settlement at Southwark and was a co-opted member of the LCC Mental Hospitals committee 1914-24. She held honorary posts in a number of associations connected with mental health, and was the first honorary secretary of the Child Guidance Council in 1927. She was a member of the NUWW. Created DBE 1947.

She published on mental health and related subjects.

**163.**

**Franklin, Miss Alice Caroline (c.1885-1964)**

She came from a Jewish family, possibly was the sister of Beatrice Samuel [see below]. She was a school manager and worked on care committees in Whitechapel. She became an organiser for the Women's Land Army in WW1. She was a member of the Society for the Overseas Settlement of Women and of the Fawcett Society. She was a founder of the Townswomen's Guilds movement and for 17 years was honorary secretary of the Guild's national union. She was a member of the NUWW.

**181.**

**Fraser, Annie Munroe (1894-1985)**

Father: James, a vet; Mother: Annie Rossell Palmer.

Educated Haberdashers School, Acton; University of Munich; Newnham 1914-17; MA 1963.

m. 1920, Herbert Greenway Newth; 2 sons.

Assistant Mistress, Tonbridge Co. School, 1917-18, and Edgbaston High School, 1926-35; Acton Co. School for Boys 1941-57; Priory Secondary School for Girls, 1957-62; Twyford Comprehensive School, Acton, 1962-67.

She published history, including Vol IV, and joint author of Vol V, of the Penguin History of Britain.

**196.**

**Fry, Sara Margery (1874-1958)** [DNB]

Father: Rt. Hon. Sir Edward; Mother: Mariabella Hodgkin.

Quaker family

Educated at home; Miss Lawrence's School, Brighton; Roedean; Somerville College. MA.

She became librarian at Somerville 1898-1904 and the warden of University House, Birmingham 1904-14. During the war she worked with the Quakers' War Victims Relief Mission in France. She was the hon. secretary of the Howard league for Penal Reform 1919-26. She was the

Principal of Somerville 1926-31; made an Hon. Fellow in 1932. She was a Governor of the BBC 1937-39 and a member of the Treasury University Grants Committee from 1919-48. She was a member of the NUWW. She was a JP and held two honorary doctorates.

Published various articles and pamphlets and *Arms of the Law* [1951].  
148., 199.

**Furniss, Mrs Averil D. Sanderson (c.1873-1962)**

Father: Henry Frederick Nicholl; Mother: Dora Mary Eddis.

m. 1902, Henry (1868-1939), created Baron Sanderson 1930.

She was an architect and a member of the Labour party.

She published on housing.

97.

**Furse, Katharine (1875-1952) [DNB]**

Father J.A. Symonds; Mother Janet Catherine North.

Educated at home by her mother and governesses, went to school briefly at her own request [1892-3] but left when her father died.

m. 1900 Charles Wellington Furse [1868-1904]; 2 sons Peter and Paul.

Her parents believed in higher education for women but did not encourage it for their own daughters. After her father's death the family lived in London where she attended lectures in physiology and First Aid at King's College, wanted to train as a nurse or take up medicine. She wanted to go to Newnham and in 1896 she took the common entrance examinations but was unsuccessful. During the later 1890s she had some limited involvement with the COS and was a hospital visitor.

Her marriage increased her already wide social networks as her husband was a portrait painter. In 1911/12 she joined the VADs in London where she met Isabel and Rachel Crowdy and later Mary and Edith Crowdy. After the outbreak of war she campaigned for the organisation of women's war work, and was involved with the setting up of the Women's Department of the Ministry of National Service. In 1916 she was appointed Commandant in Chief of Women VADs; created DBE in 1917; appointed director of WRENS in 1918. She was involved in various initiatives to assist demobilised women, such as domestic service and emigration. She was active in the Guide Movement and helped in formation of the World Association of Guides and Scouts, and was Director of the World Bureau of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts 1928-38. she was a member of the NUWW.

She published articles on women's work and an autobiography *Hearts and Pomegranates*, [1940].

81., 96.

**Fyfe, Mrs Dorothea Hope Geddes (d.1977)**

Father: John Forbes White.

m. 1908, William; one daughter, two sons.

She was a member of the NUWW and of the Public Health Committee.

171.

**Gandy, Mrs Ida**  
NUWW.

**86.**

**Gardner, Miss**  
**50.**

**Gasson, Mrs M.A.**

She was a member of the Woolwich branch of the WCG and involved in trades unionism.

**54.**

**Gill, Miss Annie W.**  
**120.**

**Gilliland, Miss Margaret A.**  
**74.**

**Gilmour, Lady Susan (1870-1962)**

Father: Frederick Lygon, 6th Earl Beauchamp; Mother Lady Mary C. Stanhope.

Her sister was Lady Ampthill [see above].

Educated at home.

m. 1889, Sir Robert G.; two daughters, one son.

She was involved in Boer war relief work and subsequently in hospital management and the support of professional nursing services. She was governor of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, one of the first two women to hold that position; the other was Louisa Stevenson, sister of Flora [see below].

After her husband's death in 1939 she moved to London and her charitable work increased.

**123.**

**Gladstone, Dorothy (d.1953)**

Father: Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Paget; Mother: Caroline Isabel Surtees.

Educated privately and at Queen's College, London.

m. 1901, Herbert, son of W.E. Gladstone, and 1st Viscount.

Her family were Conservative, but she had Liberal sympathies, and became president of the WNLA. She was president of the WLF in 1938. She was a keen free trader, and for four years chairman of the Women's Free Trade Union. She worked on campaigns against sweated labour. She was a member of Industrial Law Committee and the Personal Service Association.

In South Africa she was the Chairman of the King Edward VII Memorial Order of Nurses and helped to establish a district nursing service. She was in charge of South African nurses serving in France during WW1. She and her husband were involved with Belgian refugee relief work in WW1; she was a member of the League of Nations Union and chairman of its women's advisory council. She was a member of the NUWW.

**27.**



Mrs M. Glyn Jones [see Jones]

**Glynn, Miss**

**96.**

**Gordon, Maria M. Ogilvie (d.1939)**

Father: Rev. Alex Ogilvie.

Educated Ladies' College, Edinburgh; University College, London, DSc 1893.

m. 1895, Dr John Gordon, 2 daughters; 1 son.

She also studied Geology and Palaentology at Munich University 1891-95 where she was awarded a PhD with the highest honours ever given in the subject in 1900, being also the first women to graduate from the University with a PhD.

She was a noted researcher and scholar and was awarded a number of honorary degrees for her pioneering work in geology. She was a Fellow of the Linnean, and Geological Societies of London; and an Hon. Fellow of the Geological Society of Vienna.

She was president of the NUWW/NCW 1916-20; and vice president of the International Council of Women; Chairman of the Mothercraft and Child Welfare Exhibition Committee 1919-21; and honorary president of the National Women Citizens' Association, and the Association of Women's Friendly Societies. She was a member of the WLF and stood as a Liberal candidate in the 1924 election.

Awarded DBE in 1935.

She published extensively on geology.

**65.**

**Gould, Barbara Ayrton (1886-1950)**

Father: Professor William E. Ayrton; Mother: Phoebe Sarah Hertha Marks, protegee of Barbara Bodichon.

Educated Notting Hill High School and London University.

m. 1910, Gerald Gould; one son.

She began post-graduate research but gave it up in 1908 because of her growing involvement with the suffrage movement. She had joined the ILP as a student and was member of the WSPU, and was briefly imprisoned for suffrage activism. In 1914 she founded Society of United Suffragists to unite male and female supporters of women's suffrage. She was a member of the National Peace Council and the Women's International League. In 1919 she joined staff of Daily Herald as Publicity Manager, but resigned in 1921 when her son was born. She was elected to the NEC of the Labour party in 1930 and was prominent in its Women's Section, and was chairman of the party 1939-40. MP 1945-1950. She was a JP and school governor; and member of the British Council, of which she became vice-chairman.

She wrote extensively for Labour publications, especially *Labour Woman* which she edited in 1932.

**209.**

**Grant, Miss Elizabeth**  
Member of the NUWW.  
**21.**

**Gregory, Miss Alice S.**  
Member of the NUWW.  
**206.**

**Gregory, Miss Christiana S.**  
A member of the NUWW and of the Women's Diocesan Society  
**102.**

**Grier, [Mary] Lynda Dorothea (1880-1967)**  
Father: Richard Macgregor, a clergyman; Mother: Grace Allen.  
She was deaf as a child and unable to go to school. Her hearing improved as she grew older and she attended Newnham College, 1904-08.  
She taught economics at Newnham and was appointed assistant lecturer in 1913, becoming a full lecturer in 1915. She was acting head of Economics at Leeds University in 1915 until the end of WW1. In 1921 she became principal of Lady Margaret Hall. She was not a member of the Liberal party, but was involved with its summer school movement. She served on trade boards and was a school governor. She worked for the British Council. She was a member of the NUWW. Awarded the CBE in 1950. She published on education and economics.  
**188., 201.**

**Guy, Mrs Gerda S.**  
**97.**

**Gwatkin, Ethel Ruth (1875-1952)**  
Father: Henry Melvill, Fellow of St Johns, and Professor of Ecclesiastical History; Mother: Lucy Brock.  
Educated Cheltenham Ladies' College; Newnham 1895-9.  
She was lecturer in Mathematics and Classics, Maria Grey Training College 1906-08 and assistant mistress Winchester High School 1909-10. She was appointed the first head mistress of Queen Mary High School, Liverpool 1910-23 and was the head mistress of Streatham Hill High School 1923-27. She was president of the Head Mistresses' Association 1935-37. She published on mathematics.  
**75.**

**Gwynne-Vaughan, Dame Helen Charlotte Isabella (1879-1967)** [DNB]  
Father: Capt. Hon. A.H.D. Fraser, of the Scots Guards who died when she was five; Mother: Lucy Jane Fergusson.  
Educated at private school; Cheltenham Ladies College; and King's College.  
m. 1911, Professor T.G. Gwynne-Vaughan (d. 1915).

In 1897 with her mother and sister, she began voluntary work with London working girls' clubs in Camberwell. After graduation she worked at Royal Holloway [whose Principal at the time was Emily Penrose] with Dr Margaret Benson, Professor of Botany. She was awarded her DSc in 1907 and appointed head of Botany at Birkbeck College in 1909. After her husband's death, she became involved with spiritualism. She was less concerned with women's political rights than their economic ones; she founded the University of London Suffrage Society with Dr Louisa Garrett Anderson in 1907, but had authoritarian views on suffrage and saw no need for it to be extended, especially to the uneducated. She supported women's claims for equal pay in her evidence to the RC into London University in 1913, but was opposed to the proposal [defeated] that they should have obligatory representation in the ratio of 1:4 on the Senate, arguing that this was not true equality of opportunity.

In 1917 she was appointed Chief Comptroller of Women's Army Auxiliary Forces and until 1919 Commodore of Women's Royal Air Force. She was recalled to Women's Services in 1939, and served with the Auxiliary Territorial Service with a rank equivalent to major-general. In 1941 she returned to Birkbeck and retired in 1944. She stood for election to the LCC in 1922 and fought three successive parliamentary elections as a Conservative, but was never elected.

She was awarded a CBE in 1918 in the military section, the first to a woman. She published on education, military service and botany, including a pamphlet, 'The Management of the Small Committee', and an autobiography *Service with the Army* [1924].

128., 149., 158., 159., 169., 191.

**Hadow, Miss Grace Eleanor (1874-1940)**

Father: Rev. W.E. Hadow.

Educated Brownhill Court, Stround; Truro High School; Somerville 1900-03.

She lectured in English at Bryn Mawr, USA, 1903-04 and at Lady Margaret Hall 1906-17. She worked at the Ministries of Munitions and Labour in WW1. She held various honorary positions and was a member of the NUWW.

She published literary criticism, biography and on political and social matters.

102.

**Haldane, Elizabeth Sanderson (1862-1937)** [DNB]

Father: Robert; Mother [his second wife]: Mary Elizabeth Burdon-Sanderson. One of her brothers was R.B. Haldane (1856-1928); Secretary of State for War 1908-1912; and Lord Chancellor for the Liberal Government 1912-15 and for the Labour Government in 1924.

She was educated at home and at private school in Edinburgh, had wanted to go to college but was not allowed to by her family.

She cared for her mother; and acted as her brother's hostess during his political career in London. She worked in London with O. Hill and

established a housing organisation for the poor in Edinburgh (1884). She was a member of the Edinburgh Social Union. She was the first woman trustee of the Carnegie Trust in the UK. She was associated with foundation in 1890 of the Scottish Women's Benefit Society and campaigned for old age pensions for women in Scotland. She was a member of the NUWW and involved in various organisations concerned with women's and children's health, and nursing registration and training. She and Louisa Stevenson were responsible to the Colonial Office for recruiting nurses for the Concentration Camps run by the British during the Boer War. She was the first woman JP in Scotland and governor of Birkbeck College. She maintained close friendships with other leading women reformers, including V. Markham, Helen Kerr and the Stevenson sisters. Many of these friendships are recorded through her letters to her mother, to whom she and her brother Richard wrote daily when they were away. She published widely: philosophy (she translated Hegel and wrote commentaries on Descartes); literary biographies; and books, pamphlets and articles on health and education. Her autobiography is *From One Century to Another* [1937].  
**28., 35., 40., 105., 155.**

**Hall, Miss Wilhelmina L. Brodie**

She was a Poor Law Guardian at Eastbourne and secretary for the Association for the Advancement of Boarding Out. She was a member of the Cottage Training Home Association, the Girls' Friendly Society, the Rural District Councils' Association and the NUWW. She belonged to the Albemarle Club.  
**96.**

**Hamilton, Mary (1894-1962)**

Father: Robert Adamson, Professor of Logic, Edinburgh University; Mother: Margaret Duncan, a Botany teacher.

Educated Aberdeen Girls' High School; Glasgow Girls' High School; University of Kiel; and Newnham.

m. 1905, C.J. Hamilton.

She was a member of the ILP. She was elected as a Labour MP for Blackburn in 1929 and was parliamentary private secretary to Clement Attlee. She lost the seat in 1931. She was appointed a governor of the BBC 1933-37, and was a London Alderman 1937-40. She entered the civil service in 1940. CBE 1949.

She wrote extensively: biographies; articles on politics and various subjects; novels; reviews.

**161., 209.**

**Hannay, Jane Ewing (1868-1938)**

Father Rev J.S. Wilson; Mother Jane Ewing Brown.

Educated St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Girton

m. 1899, Robert Kerr Hannay [1867-1940], Professor at University of Edinburgh; 1 son.

She taught at St Leonard's School, 1890-99 and resigned when she married. She was a member of the Scottish Savings Committee; the Central Committee, and vice chairman of the Scottish Committee for the Training and Employment of Women; she was a member of the Edinburgh Local Employment Committee, and chairman of its women's sub-committee; and of various trade boards. She was a member of the NUWW.

JP. OBE 1918; CBE 1933.

**152.**

**Hardie, Agnes Agnew (1874-1951)**

Father, John Pettigrew.

Married George Hardie [brother to Keir] in 1909.

She was a shop worker and campaigned for better conditions for shop assistants, through the formation of Shop Assistants' Union, and later with Mary Macarthur in the NFWW. She was active in Labour politics and was women's organiser for the party in Scotland and was MP for Glasgow (Springburn) 1937-1945.

**216.**

**Hare, Dorothy Christian (d.1967)**

Father: Edward.

Educated Cheltenham Ladies College and the London School of Medicine for Women. She qualified as a doctor in 1905.

Between 1906-10 she held appointments in various hospitals, and from 1910 to 1916 was a GP in Cambridge. She worked for the RAMC in Malta 1916-17 and was medical director of the WRNS in 1918-19. She set up hostels for young women with venereal disease. She was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and president of the therapeutics section of the Royal Society of Medicine. CBE in 1919. In her retirement she lived in Cornwall where she was involved with the Falmouth arts centre. She published in medical journals.

**154.**

**Harris, Miss Lilian**

She was a member of the WCG, NUWW, WNLA and WTUL.

**96., 102.**

**Hawtrey, Miss Freda Frances**

Educated Clewer High School; Royal Holloway College 1896-99;

Somerville College 1909-1910.

She was warden of women students at the Bangor Training College from 1910-12 and was appointed principal of Darlington Teacher Training College in 1912.

**127., 153., 168., 188., 201.**

**Hill, Octavia (1838-1912)** [DNB]

Father James, a merchant; Mother Caroline Southwood Smith, his second wife, who, after her husband's mental and physical breakdown, ran the

household and his remaining business affairs with the help of her father, Dr Southwood Smith, reformer.

Educated at home, mainly by her mother and grandfather.

Her parents were philanthropists, her father founded an infants school. With her sisters she started a school to promote a higher standard of education for girls. She was influenced by Christian Socialism and became member of Central council of Charity Organisation Society in 1875. She was invited to join RC on Housing in 1889 but refused believing that political measures would not produce social reform and that voluntary work was more valuable. In the late 1880s she was connected with the University Settlement Movement, with links to the Southwark Settlement. During her early years in London she met Ruskin and was for a time apprenticed to him as a copyist and began her friendship with Emma Cons [see above]. She belonged to the Kyrle Society, founded by her sister Miranda, and was involved in the Open Space movement which led to the creation of the National Trust in 1895.

She published books, articles, and pamphlets about her work, and a series of Letters to Fellow Workers.

**17.**

**Hobhouse, Georgina Fleetwood (d.1927)**

Father: George Pargiter Fuller, MP; Mother: Emily Hicks-Beach.

m. 1890, Sir Charles Edward Henry Hobhouse.

She supported her husband's political career and was a member and a chairman of the WLF. She worked on mental health and nursing committees. She was chairman of the County Nursing Association and one of its founders. During WWI she organised the Post Office Relief Fund. She was a member of the General Nursing Council, a county and district councillor in Wiltshire and a JP.

**24.**

**Hood, Mrs Eleanor Dagleas (b.1865)**

Education, elementary.

She was a member of the Labour party and the WCG of which she was president 1918-19. She was a poor law guardian and a JP.

**102.**

**How-Martyn, Mrs Edith (1874-1954)**

Born in Cheltenham. Educated at North London Collegiate School;

University College, Aberystwyth; London University.

m., 1899, Herbert Martyn.

She taught at Westfield College, 1921-26. She was honorary secretary of the WSPU, but left it to join the WFL, which she co-founded with Charlotte Despard and Teresa Billington-Greig. She stood for Parliament as an independent in 1918 and in 1919 was elected as the first woman councillor on Middlesex county council. She was a leading member of the movement to promote birth control, and founder of the Birth Control International Information Centre in 1929. She emigrated to Australia in 1939.

She published on birth control and women's issues.

**145.**

**Hughes, Elizabeth Phillipps (1851-1925)** [DNB]

Father: Dr John Hughes, surgeon of Carmarthen; Mother: Anne Phillipps [Levi] - her family were Jewish, but had converted to Christianity and changed their name.

Educated at Hope House, Taunton; Cheltenham Ladies' College; Newnham.

She was a teacher and an educationist. She helped to form the Association of Assistant Mistresses. She was on the governing body of the University of Wales, and a member of Glamorgan Education Committee. She was a Red Cross and VAD organiser during WW1. She was a member of the NUWW. She wrote a number of pamphlets on education and sections in education books.

**11., 32., 116.**

**Hurst, Mrs Margaret Alice (d.1969)**

Father: Sir Alfred Hopkinson; Mother: Esther Wells.  
m., 1905, Gerald Berkeley; 5 daughters, one son.

**152.**

**Husband, Miss Agnes (d.1929)**

She worked for women's causes in Scotland and was one of the first women in Scotland to serve on a parish council and an education authority, both in Dundee.

**55.**

**Irving, Dorothea (1873-1933)**

Father: John Forster Baird.

Educated South Hampstead Stage School.

m., 1896, Henry Brodribb Irving; one daughter, one son.

She was an actress 1894-1912; involved in infant welfare work from 1908 and worked at an infant welfare centre in St Pancras. She was honorary secretary of the National Baby Week Council; and was a poor law guardian 1912-18. She was a member of the NUWW.

**115.**

**Irwin, Margaret Hardinge (d.1940)**

Father Captain James Richie Irwin.

Educated privately.

She was involved in charitable social work, produced reports on women's work and housing, and belonged to a number of social organisations, including the NUWW. She was a member of the Council of the Economics Section of the Royal Philosophical Society, Glasgow. She was appointed an assistant commissioner to RC on Labour in 1892.

She was a socialist and active in Scottish trades unionism where she took a very partisan line; she was a friend of J.R. MacDonald. She owned a fruit

farm in Perthshire where she ran training schemes for women as preparation for farming at home and overseas. She was interested in land settlement for women and in various emigration schemes.

**183., 198.**

Iveagh, Gwendolen Florence Mary, Countess of - See Elveden.

**Ivens, Mary Hannah Frances (c.1871-1944)**

m.1930, C.M. Knowles, as his second wife [see Lilian Knowles, below]. Studied medicine at the Royal Free Hospital, London, graduating in 1900, and in 1907 was appointed clinical lecturer in midwifery and gynaecology at Liverpool University and honorary consulting surgeon at the Stanley Hospital and Liverpool Maternity Hospital. She was the medical representative on the Advisory Committee to the National Health Insurance joint committee. She was involved in the suffrage movement and was chairman of the Liverpool Conservative and Unions Women's Suffrage Society.

In WW1 she joined the Scottish Women's Hospital Corps established by Elsie Inglis and was surgeon in charge of hospitals at Royaumont and Villers Cotterets. She returned to her work in Liverpool after the war and was a founder member of first president of the Association of Qualified Medical Women and founder and president of the North of England Medical Women's Society. She was awarded the CBE in 1929 and was a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and held the Croix de Guerre. She was active in local politics as a Conservative.

She wrote on medicine and on women in medicine.

**46., 118.**

**Ivimey, Amy Anne (c.1865-1938)**

She was a pioneer of the probation system and worked on the early schemes for the Home Office before WW1. She was a delegate to the World Congress on Child Welfare in Brussels. in 1921.

**135.**

**Jarret, Mrs Alice (c.1877-1959)**

She was involved in the early Labour movement and with child welfare work. MBE 1956.

**96., 97.**

**Jeffery, Maud Mary (c.1869-1949)**

Educated at Askes Girls School, Hatcham.

She did voluntary work in Deptford and Stepney and became Octavia Hill's private secretary and later one of her housing managers. In 1916 she became agent for the Commissioners of Crown Lands in London. After WW1 she was appointed to the Dept of Woods and Forests' Estate at Cumberland Market, London. She belonged to the Association of Women House Property Managers. She led a breakaway movement from the association in 1928 and set up the Octavia Hill Club to extend Hill's



principles, after this many of the new municipal posts in the provinces were filled by her members while the Association filled most of the London posts.

97.

**Jewson, Dorothy (1884-1964)**

Father: George; Mother: M.J. Jarrold.

Educated Norwich High School; Girton College.

m. 1936, (1) R. Tanner-Smith [d.1939]; 1945, (2) Campbell Stephen [d.1947].

Between 1925-35 she was a member of the administrative council of the ILP and from 1927-37 served on the Norwich city council. She was elected Labour MP for Norwich 1923-24, the first MP from Girton.

157., 180., 184.

**Jex-Blake, Katharine (1860-1951)**

Father Very Rev. Thomas William; Mother: Henrietta Cordery.

Her aunt was Sophia Jex-Blake.

Educated at home and at Girton 1879-82.

Classical Mistress, Notting Hill High School 1884; she was appointed to Girton as Resident Lecturer, 1885-1916; Vice Mistress, 1903-1916; and Mistress 1916-22.

She published one translation of a classical text.

106.

**Jobson, Miss B.**

117., 123.

**Jones, Miss Dorothea Pughe (d.1955)**

Educated at home, Queen's College, London; and Somerville College, 1897-1900. She was inspector of teaching in the South African concentration camps in 1902 and worked for the Red Cross in WW1.

131.

**Jones, Miss Mary D.**

She worked as secretary to Professor Stanley Jevons of Cardiff and had made a study of employment statistics. In 1910 she was appointed as one of the first women supervising officers of labour exchanges, covering Liverpool and Wales. In WW1 she was a deputy commissioner of the National Service Dept., and worked with Margaret Mackworth, later Lady Rhondda, at its Welsh office. She lived near Cardiff at 2 Ly Graes, Rhulins Garden Village.

97.

**Jones, Mrs M. Glyn**

66.

**Joynson-Hicks, Lady Grace Louise (d.1952)**

Father: Richard Hampson Joynson.

m. 1895, William Hicks [1865-1932] MP, created Viscount Brentford, 1929;

one daughter, one son.  
199.

**Kelly, Dame Elisabeth Hariott (1878-1962)**

Father: Lt. Col. H. Holdsworth Kelly; Mother: Elisabeth Collum.

She held a number of voluntary positions in welfare and social work organisations, including the Red Cross of which she was the divisional president for Portsmouth. She was one of the first women JPs in Portsmouth and chairman of its juvenile court 1933-1950. From 1939 she was the honorary organiser of Portsmouth social services. She was a member of the NUWW. DBE, 1953.

170., 140, 199.

**Kelly, Miss Eleanor T.**

195.

**Kelly, Miss Hilda Mary (d.1954)**

She was the sister of E.H. Kelly [above].

She joined the COS in 1906, becoming assistant secretary in 1919, and worked with the Officers' Families Fund in WW1. She was a member of the central council for Women's Church Work, the Hospital Almoners' Committee, the National Council of Girls' Clubs and the YWCA.

66., 102.

**Kenmare, Elizabeth, Countess of (1867-1944)**

Father: Edward C. Baring, first Baron Revelstoke; Mother: Louisa E. C. Bulteel.

m. 1887, Valentine C. Browne, fifth Earl; two daughters, two sons.

She was chairman of the Advisory council for Ireland of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

119.

**Kerans, Miss**

96.

**Kerr, Miss Eleanor (b.1906)**

Father: Rev. Arthur ; Mother: Florence Hargreaves.

Educated Greenhead High School Huddersfield; Girton 1925-28.

She trained and worked as a teacher , becoming head of Great Yarmouth High School in 1942.

89.

**Kerr, Helen Louisa**

m. Dr George Kerr.

She trained as a housing worker with Octavia Hill and became secretary to the Edinburgh Social Union, with a particular interest in housing. She belonged to the City of Edinburgh COS.; and was a member of Board of Management of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. She worked and was friendly

with Elizabeth Haldane, and the Stevenson sisters. She opposed the minority report on Poor Laws. She was much influenced by Dr Thomas Chalmers, especially in her views on eugenics. She was a member of the NUWW.

She wrote articles on social reform and *The Path of Social Progress* [1912].  
43., 98., 123.

**Kerry, Countess of (1885-1964)**

Father: Sir Edward S. Hope; Mother: Constance C. Leslie.

m. [1] 1904, Henry W.E. Petty-Fitzmaurice, seventh Earl; two daughters, three sons. [2] 1941, Lord Colum E. Crichton-Stuart.

She was a JP and member of Wiltshire County council.

58.

**Knowles, Lillian Charlotte Anne (d. 1926)**

Father: Philip Tomn; Mother: M. Yescombe.

Educated at Truro High School; Girton College; Trinity College, Dublin.

m. 1904, C.M. Knowles, a barrister; one son.

She was appointed lecturer in economic history at LSE in 1904 and in 1907 became a reader of the University of London. She was Dean of the Faculty of Economics 1920-24 and a Professor of History.

Member of the NUWW.

She wrote and edited books on economic history.

94., 108.

**Knox, Lady Alice**

Father: Sir Robert Dundas.

m. 1889, Sir William George Knox [1847-1916]

She was involved in voluntary work with emigration societies and was a member of the Victoria League. In later life she corresponded with E.S. Haldane over a memoir of one of her relatives, Miss Anne Dundas, who was active in the mid-19th century women's movement.

13.

**Laird, Mrs Mary Burns**

98., 121.

**Lawrence, (Arabella) Susan (1871-1947) [DNB]**

Father: Nathaniel Tertius, a solicitor; Mother: Laura Bacon.

Educated University College; Newnham College.

She was a member of London School Board in 1900; LCC 1910-12 and 1912-28; Poplar Borough Council 1919-24; Deputy Chairman LCC 1925-26. She was initially a Conservative, switched her allegiance to Labour in 1910 as a result of her efforts to improve conditions for charwomen in London schools. She advised the women to join the NFWW and became a member herself. She was an adviser on the Tribunal set up by the Minister of Munitions under the Munitions of War Act. She was elected Labour MP for East Ham 1923-4 and 1929-31, and was one of the first women to be

elected to the Labour Party National Executive, becoming Chairman of the party in 1930.

She was characterised in various press reports as a woman who had succeeded on male terms. She was acknowledged as an expert on local government and rating finance.

She published various articles including 'Letter to a Woman Munition Worker' 1942. She translated Trotsky's *Lessons of October 1917*.

54., 80., 83., 88., 93, and p.358.

**Lawrence, Lady Isabel Mary** (d. 1941)

Father: 1st Baron Hillingdon; Mother: Lady Louisa I. Lascelles.

m., 1892, Sir Herbert Alexander Lawrence; 1 daughter; 2 sons.

In 1918 she was co-opted as a member of the LCC education committee and became chairman of its special services sub-committee. In 1928 she was elected to the LCC as member for St George's, Hanover Square. She had a special interest in the development of the probation system. She was president of the London Association of Mental Welfare. She worked for the YMCA in WW2. She was appointed a JP in 1924.

185.

**Lawrence, Hon. Maude Agnes** (1864-1933)

Father: John Laird Mair, first Lord Lawrence, Viceroy of India; Mother:

Catherine Sumner.

Educated at home and Bedford College.

She was a member of the last two London School Boards, co-opted in 1900 to Westminster School Board and elected to the same board at last school board election in 1901. She was a member of the LCC Education Committee 1904-05. She joined the Board of Education and was chief woman inspector - a post created as a result of Sir R. Morant's administrative reforms at the board after the Education Act of 1902. In 1920 she became director of Women's Establishments at the Treasury, another new post, which oversaw women's appointments throughout the civil service.

She was awarded the DBE in 1926.

16.

**Lawrence, Miss Reina Emily**

She held the degree of LLB. She was a member of the WNLA and on its executive committee c.1897-1902. She lived at 37 Belsize Avenue, London in the 1920s. She was one of the trustees for the Mary Macarthur Home.

54.

**Layton, Mrs Eleanor Dorothea [Dorothy]** (1887-1959)

Father: Francis B. P. Osmaston; Mother Eleanor Margaret Field, a social worker.

Educated Priors Field, Godalming; Newnham College 1906-09.

m. 1919, Walter Thomas Layton [editor of the *The Economist*], ktd. 1930, baron 1947; four daughters, three sons.

She held many honorary positions and was an executive member of the WLF and chairman of its family endowment inquiry in 1926. She was a member of the NUWSS. She was a member of Weybridge UDC and chairman of its housing committee 1923-26.

**102.**

Leach, Dame Florence Burleigh - see Simpson

**Lewis, Lady Ruth (1871-1946)**

Father: W.S. Caine, MP; Mother: Alice Stowell Brown.

Educated Clapham High School; Newnham 1890-93.

m. 1897, Sir John Herbert, one daughter.

She was a member of NUSEC and involved with the Conservative party.

She was a member of the courts of the National Library of Wales and of

University College, Bangor, and of the Flintshire county council in 1935.

She was a member of the NUWW. She had a great interest in Welsh culture.

OBE, JP.

She published collections of folk songs.

**137.**

**Livingstone, Dame Adelaide Lord (d.1970)**

Father: C.D. Stickney; Mother: Mrs Sutherland Orr.

Educated in Europe and the USA.

m. 1915, W.H.D. Livingstone.

She worked for the Friends' Emergency Committee and the International Women's Relief Committee in England and in mainland Europe during WW1. She was a member of a delegation on the treatment of prisoners of war and head of the War Office mission to search for missing soldiers in France and Flanders 1919-20. She was assistant director of Graves Registration and Enquiries in central Europe 1920-22. She was a member of numerous international committees on peace and co-operation and was vice president of the United Nations Association. DBE in 1918.

**70.**

**Lloyd, Mrs C. Ethel**

nee Robarts

m. 1914, T. Alwyn Lloyd.

MA.

**97.**

Lloyd Evans, see **Evans.**

**Lloyd George, Dame Margaret (d.1941)**

Father: Richard Owen, a farmer.

m. 1888, David Lloyd George (1863-1945); three daughters, two sons.

She supported her husband's career and was involved in social and welfare work, especially child welfare and temperance. She was a member of

Criccieth urban district council and its chairman in 1931. She was the first woman to be appointed as a magistrate in Wales. She was a member of, and worked for, the Lifeboats Association.

**153.**

**Locke, Mrs C.A.**

**96.**

**Londonderry, Edith Helen, Marchioness of (1879-1959)**

Father: 1st Viscount Chaplin. Mother: Lady Florence Sutherland Leveson Gower.

Her mother died when she was young and she was brought up by her grandmother.

Educated at home.

m. 1899, Charles S.H. Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 7th Marquess of Londonderry; one daughter, one son.

She was a leading political hostess. In 1915 she founded the Women's Legion and became its Director-General, she also served in the Legion in WW2. In 1917 she was the first woman to be awarded a military DBE. She was president of the Northern Ireland Council of the British Red Cross Society.

She wrote history, memoirs and an autobiography, *Retrospect*, 1938.

**96., 105.**

**Longman, Mary (1881-1926)**

Father: Charles J., head of publishing firm; Mother: Harriet Ann Evans.

Educated at home; St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Girton; LSE 1905-06.

m., 1919 Wolter Stenbäck.

She was a Fabian, and was employed by B. Webb [see below] as an assistant investigator for the RC on Poor Laws. She was a member of the WLL and briefly on its executive in 1915. After her marriage she moved to Finland where she worked for the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and was correspondent for the *Times* in Helsingfors 1923-26.

She published journalism and academic articles in Swedish and Finnish.

**80.**

**Lowe, Eveline (1869-1956)** [DNB]

Father: John Farren; Mother: Sarah Saint Giles.

Educated Milton Mount College and Homerton College.

m. 1903, Dr George C. Lowe (d.1919).

She trained as a teacher, became lecturer and then Vice Principal of Homerton College, resigning when she married. She was a member of the ILP. She was a member of the Bermondsey Board of Guardians and of the LCC West Bermondsey 1922-46; she was deputy chairman of the LCC 1929-30 and chairman (1st woman) 1939-40. She claimed not to be a career politician, and had no interest in national politics. Her main interest was in education.

**96., 209.**

**Lowe, Lucy Augusta (1873-1948)**

Father Rev. Charles; Mother Anne Diggles.

Educated Bolton Church Institute; private school, Newbury; Girton 1892-95. She was assistant mistress at Blackheath High School 1896-1905; and head mistress Leeds Girls' High School 1905-32. She was President of the Head Mistresses Association 1927-29 and belonged to a large number of educational committees concerned with assessment and examinations. She was a member of LEAs in Leeds; West Riding; and Cambridge; and co-opted to Somerset County Education committee. She was a member of Leeds University Court and many other public bodies, and societies, including the NUWW.

She published French and German textbooks and articles on education.

114.

**Lyttelton, Lady Katharine Sarah (1860-1943)**

Father: James A. Stuart-Wortley; Mother: Hon. Jane Lawley.

m. 1883, Sir Neville [brother of Alfred Lyttelton, Conservative Cabinet minister (see *DNB*) and Lucy Cavendish (see above)]; three daughters.

She did welfare work in South Africa during her husband's tour of duty there. She was a member of the WIC and worked with refugee organisations in WW1 and was chairman of the Chelsea Belgian refugee committee.

185.

**Lyttelton, Edith, Dame (d.1948)**

Father: Archibald Balfour.

m. 1892, Alfred Lyttelton, his second wife; 1 daughter, 1 son.

She was involved in various campaigns for women's rights, including the trades union and anti-sweating movements. She supported the National Theatre and was a member of its executive committee and held similar positions with other theatre companies. She was a member of the Society for Psychical Research and was known as a good organiser.

In WW1 she was director of the women's branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and one of the founders of the Women's Land Army. Between 1923-1931 she was appointed five times as a British delegate to the League of Nations Assembly. She was a member of the NUWW.

DBE 1917; GBE 1929.

She wrote plays, including *Warp and Woof* [1908], an expose of conditions of women clothing workers; novels and biographies.

54., 143.

**Macadam, Elizabeth (c.1871-1948)**

She trained and worked as a social worker at the Women's University Settlement at Southwark and was influenced by Octavia Hill in her belief that volunteer social workers should be trained, but also supported state involvement in social services. She was appointed the warden of the

Liverpool Victoria Women's Settlement in 1902. She became the companion of E. Rathbone [see below] and moved to London with her. She was a member of the NUWW.

66., 102.

**Macarthur, Mary Reid (1880-1921)** [DNB]

Father: John Duncan Macarthur; Mother: Anne Elizabeth Martin.

Educated at Glasgow Girls' High School and in Germany.

m. 1911, Will Anderson [1878-1919], MP for Attercliffe, Sheffield; one daughter.

Her father was a draper in Ayr, her first job was as his book-keeper, she also did free-lance journalism. She joined the Shop Assistants' Union [see Agnes Hardie, above]; became the only woman president of a Scottish branch and was elected president of the Scottish national district council.

As a young woman she was a member of the Primrose League; she later joined the ILP. In 1903 she was appointed secretary to the WTUL. Largely at her instigation the league founded the more militant National Federation of Working Women in 1906, modelled on the new unions of the 1890s, for unskilled workers, and she was its first president. In 1908 she took the position of general secretary and G. Tuckwell became president. In 1920 the NFWW voted to become part of the National Union of General Workers, and effectively disappeared as a force for women workers.

She and G. Tuckwell were among the founders of the Anti-Sweating League in 1906. She campaigned for equal pay; founded and edited *The Woman Worker* in 1908. She supported the International Labour Movement and with M. Bondfield attended its general and women's conferences in Washington. She was one of the first women to be elected to the executive committee of the Labour party, and stood as Labour candidate for Stourbridge in 1918. She was a member of the NUWW.

She published on labour and industrial matters. See also M.A. Hamilton *Mary Macarthur* [1925].

46., 49., 54., 58., 60., 72., p.357.

**McHugh, Miss Annie**

Assistant mistress in Ireland.

92.

**McKenna, Mrs Pamela (d.1943)**

Father: Sir Herbert Jekyll; Mother Agnes Graham.

m. 1908, Reginald McKenna, banker and Liberal Cabinet minister (see *DNB*); two sons.

58.

**Mackenzie, Mrs Helen Carruthers**

nee Spence

m. 1892, Leslie [ktd. 1919].

She was a member of the NUWW.

55., 121.



**McMordie, Mrs Julia (d.1942)**

Father: Sir William Gray; Mother Dorothy Hall.

m. 1885, R.J. McMordie; one son, one daughter.

She was a member of the Belfast Corporation and chairman of its tuberculosis committee. She was an alderman of the corporation and High Sheriff of Belfast in 1928. CBE 1919. She was a JP. She was a Lady of Grace of St John of Jerusalem.

**119.**

**McNeill, Miss Margaret**

Assistant inspector of reformatory and industrial schools in Ireland.

**34.**

**Macphail, Miss S.M.**

**123.**

**McQueen, Miss M.M.**

**80., 107.**

**Magulre, Hon. Mrs Julia Beatrice (d. 1949)**

Father: Arthur Wellesley, first Viscount Peel; Mother: Adelaide S. Dugdale.

m. 1895, James Rochfort (d.1925).

She was a vice president of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

**191.**

**Manicom, Miss Kate (b.1893)**

She was a post office clerk and a member of the Workers' Union. In 1921 she was a delegate to the Working Women's International. She was deputed by the International Federation of Working Women to attend a disarmament conference in Washington in the 1920s. She was a member of the Standing Joint Council of Women's Organisations.

**133., 136.**

**Manley, Miss Kate**

Inspector at Board of Education.

**182.**

**Manley, Miss Lydia**

She was the principal of Stockwell Training College, and had links with the WIC.

She published on education and religion.

**11.**

**Mar and Kellie, Susan Violet, Countess of (1868-1938)**

Father: 8th Earl of Shaftesbury; Mother Harriet Hamilton.

m. 1892, Walter J.F., 12th Earl of Mar and 14th Earl of Kellie; one daughter, two sons.

Educated at home.

She was a prominent hostess, with a strong interest in politics, but also involved in public service, especially as a patron of nursing services. She was a member of the Red Cross and chairman of the Scottish Council of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing 1922-1938. She was awarded the King's Red Cross medal.

146.

**Markham, Violet Rosa (1872-1959)** [DNB]

Father: Charles Markham; Mother Rosa Paxton.

Educated at home, attended private school for 18 months until she was 18.

m. 1915, James Carruthers; he died in 1936.

There was a strong family involvement in politics, they were Liberals and her brother Arthur was MP for Mansfield. At 21 she founded a settlement in Chesterfield; she was opposed to COS methods of social welfare and became involved with Elizabeth Macadam in organisation of schemes of social work training. She was a leading anti-suffrage campaigner; and believed that women should work in local government but not national. She was an Imperialist, and wrote and lectured widely on the subject, especially in relation to South Africa which she visited frequently. Her first public position in London was as honorary secretary to the Personal Service Association. She was a member of the NUWW.

Her involvement with Government committees was extensive in WW1 and with May Tennant as Director, she was Deputy Director of the Women's Section of National Service Department in 1917. M. Tennant was also a close friend, as were many others connected with Government and public administration, including E.S. Haldane. In 1918 she stood for election in her dead brother's Mansfield constituency, but was not elected. She held various positions in local government; she was vice-chairman of Chesterfield education committee, and was Mayor 1927-28. In 1934 she was appointed to the Unemployment Assistance Board, becoming deputy chairman in 1937. After WW1, she was involved with re-education and rehabilitation work in Germany.

She published books, articles and pamphlets on women's work, and imperialism. See also her autobiography, *Return Passage* [1953].

54., 58., 59., 61., 67., 81., 105., 112.

**Marsden, Miss Mary E.**

Member of the WLF.

96.

**Martindale, Hilda (1875-1952)** [DNB]

Father: William; Mother: Louisa Spicer.

Educated Brighton High School; Royal Holloway College; Bedford College, studying hygiene and sanitary science.

She did voluntary social work and became a factory inspector in 1901; she rose to deputy chief inspector of factories. She was involved in civil service staff associations and became treasurer and then chairman of the Council of Women Civil Servants. In 1933 she was appointed Director of Women

Establishments at the Treasury, retiring in 1937.

She published on women's work and civil service history and an autobiography, *From One Generation to Another* [1944].

**202.**

**Martineau, Clara**

She was a Birmingham councillor in 1913 and a JP in 1926. She was a member of the NUWW.

**73.**

**Marvin, Mrs Edith Mary (1872-1958)**

Father: Alfred Deverell.

Educated at home and at private school; Somerville College 1892-95.

m. 1904, Francis Sydney Marvin [1863-1943], 3 sons.

She was a member of the staff of Morley College 1896-99, and during 1896-98 was a research student at LSE, holding a similar position at Somerville from 1898-99. She was a Schools Inspector, 1899-1904 and was involved with the South Africa Conciliation Committee. She was a member of the Women's Industrial Council, and worked in Liverpool just before WW1. She was a member of the NUWW. She became a JP during the 1920s.

She wrote on education and on economic and social subjects.

**15.**

**Mather-Jackson, Lady Ada**

Father: General Somerset of Monmouthshire.

m. 1886, Sir Henry, third baronet; three daughters, one son.

She was a member of the Order of St John of Jerusalem and of the NUWW.

**122.**

**Matheson, M. Cecile (d.1950)**

Educated private schools; Bedford College.

She was warden of Birmingham Women's Settlement 1906-16. She worked as a Lecturer in Social Economics for Oxford, Cambridge and London Extra-Mural Studies Delegacies; and as a government and private researcher on inquiries in Europe, America and India. She belonged to a number of ad hoc and permanent government committees, including the Industrial Court and Trade Boards. She was involved with WIC, contributed to WIN and was one of their panel of lecturers, and was a member of the NUWW.

She published widely on education and women's work in industry.

**66., 109., 169.**

**Mathew, Anna (1874-1948)**

Father: James Archbold Cassidy.

She was born in Ireland and educated privately.

m. 1896, Charles James Mathew (d.1923); one daughter, two sons.

In Jan 1923 she was elected an alderman of London County Council in place of her husband, and she served on the LCC as Labour member for

Limehouse 1925-37, and was deputy chairman of the LCC 1933-34. She was a member of the NUWW.

**162.**

**Matthews, Miss S. Emily**

Member of Anglesey education committee and the Anglesey and Caernarvon agriculture wages committee. In WW1 she was the organiser of the Women's Land Army in Anglesey and Caernarvon. She was a JP.

**182.**

**Mawdsley, Miss E. Winifred**

**210.**

**Mawer, Mrs Lettice Mona**

Father: Rev. Christopher Heath.

m. 1909, Allen, ktd. 1937; four daughters.

**96.**

**Mercier, Winifred Louise (1878-1934)**

Father: Lewis; Mother: Agnes Stedman.

Educated private school; Maria Grey Training College; Somerville.

She taught history at Manchester High School for Girls 1907-09; was appointed Director of Studies in History and Economics, Girton 1909-13; Vice-Principal of the City of Leeds Training College 1913-16; Lecturer in education, Manchester University 1917-18; and became Principal of Whitelands College in 1918.

Awarded OBE 1933. She was a member of the NUWW.

She wrote on history. See also L. Grier, *The Life of Winifred Mercier*, [1937].

**96., 207.**

**Midleton, Madeleine Cecilia Carlyle, Countess of (1876-1966)**

Father: Col. J.C. Stanley; Mother: Susan M.E. Mackenzie.

m. 1903, William St John Brodrick, later the Earl of Midleton [1856-1942]; she was his second wife; two sons.

She was a member of the NUWW.

**54.**

**Millar, Mrs Ella Morison**

Father: Alexander Forrester-Paton.

m. 1906, James Duncan Millar MP, ktd 1932; one daughter; one son.

**183., 199.**

**Milner, Lady Violet Georgina (1872-1958) [DNB]**

Father: F.A. Maxse; Mother Cecilia Steel.

Educated by governesses, and studied painting in Paris.

m. [1] Lord Edward Cecil [d.1918]; one daughter, one son. [2] 1921, Sir Alfred Milner.

She was involved in charitable work, especially during her time in South

Africa at the turn of the century. She was one of the founders of the Victoria League. She also had literary and artistic interests and took over the editorship of the *National Review*, after the death of her brother Leo [its editor] in 1932.

She wrote on literature, art, politics and history.

**186.**

**Mitchell, Miss Elizabeth Buchanan (1880-1967)**

Father: A. Mitchell, advocate.

Educated St George's School for Girls, Edinburgh; Lady Margaret Hall 1901-06.

She was a member of Lanarkshire education authority and held many other honorary positions.. She was a member of the WLF and stood for election as a Liberal in South Lanark in 1924 - the only Liberal woman to stand in Scotland. She was a member of Biggar town council 1935-53 and of East Kilbride (New Town) Development Corporation 1947-53. She was chairman of the Scottish Executive of the Town and Country Planning Association.

She published on planning and history.

**80.**

**Model, Mrs L.**

She lived at 105 Fellows Road, London NW and was a lady visitor to Holloway Prison. She was a member of the NUWW.

**96.**

**Montagu, Hon. Lily [Lilian] Helen (1873-1963)**

Father: Samuel, first Lord Swaythling. Mother: Ellen Cohen.

Her brother was E.S. Montagu who m. in 1915 the Hon. Venetia Stanley, daughter of the fourth Baron Stanley of Adderley.

Educated at home and at Doreck College.

She was active in Jewish affairs: President of the Central Jewish Club and of a Jewish Day Settlement; President and Founder of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues; Honorary Life President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism; Chairman and Lay Minister of a Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

She was a member of the WIC and the NUWW/NCW; a JP and chairman of Chelsea Juvenile Court 1942-45.

She wrote novels and on Jewish thought and history.

**54., 65.**

**Moore, Mrs Rosalind Moore**

She was a member of the NUWW, the WCG and the Catholic Women's League.

**97., 152.**

**Morton, Theodora Matilda (1872-1949)**

Educated North London Collegiate School; Newnham 1892-95.

She was assistant secretary of the NUWW 1895-97; and district secretary for the Soho COS 1897-1902. She held the position of principal organiser of Children's Care Committees for the LCC 1908-30, and visited the USA to report on child guidance work for the Commonwealth Fund in 1927. She returned to voluntary social work from 1920 and was awarded the OBE in 1931.

64.

**Nash, Rosalind Vaughan (1862-1952)**

Father: William Shore-Smith, changed name to Shore Nightingale, landowner; Mother: Louisa Eleanor Hutchins. Sister: Barbara [Lady Stephen]. The family was related to Florence Nightingale and to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon.

Educated Mrs Case's Co-educational School, Heath Brow School, Hampstead; Girton College.

m.1892, C. Vaughan Nash (1861-1932); one daughter, three sons.

She worked as a journalist for the *Manchester Guardian*, *Co-Operative News*, and *Daily Chronicle*. She was a leading member of the Adult Suffrage Society, a Fabian and a member of the WCG and NUWW.

She wrote books and pamphlets on adult suffrage; labour matters including 'Life and Death in the Potteries' [WCG, 1898]; and some fiction.

96. 103.

**Nettlefold, Lucy Frances (1891-1966)**

Father Oswald, wholesale hardware merchant; Mother Emily Josephine.

Educated Leinster House School, Bayswater; Newnham 1910-12, and 1913-14 [Senior Student].

She was awarded LLB (Lond), and in 1914 became a Solicitors' Articled Clerk. In 1916 she joined the Ministry of Food as an Assistant Secretary where she remained until 1919, being seconded to the National Service Department in 1917 where she worked with Violet Markham. In 1919 she joined the family firm of Nettlefold & Sons: was director and company secretary 1920-23, and managing director 1923-45.

She was elected to the borough council of Marylebone in 1945 and served as a councillor until 1956 when she was elected an alderman. During this time she represented the LCC on a number of committees, especially those concerned with the elderly, and the deaf. She was a member of the executive Committee of the British Federation of University Women and belonged to many other committees. She served on the RC on Equal Pay 1945-46.

103., 210.

**Neville, Edith (1874-1951)**

Father Sir Ralph Neville, High Court Judge; Mother Edith Cranstown Macnamara.

Educated at Halliwick Manor, New Southgate; and Newnham 1895-97.

She joined the Mary Ward Settlement and spent most of her life working in Somers Town on a variety of social reform projects, being particularly

concerned with housing improvements. During the Boer War she began working with the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association and continued this work until 1920. She was honorary secretary of the St Pancras C.O.S., and Chairman of St Pancras Housing Society for 14 years from 1933. After her death the Society set up a memorial fund to build a terrace of low-rent houses as a tribute to her work. In 1923 she was involved with the foundation of the Improved Public House Association and the Restaurant Association, and worked for both for many years. She was a member of the Bishop of London's Moral Welfare Committee; and advocated penal reform and the abolition of the death penalty. During WW2 she began work for the Citizens' Advice Bureau which she continued until her death.

She also lectured on history of painting; and organised and financed amateur and professional productions, establishing an amateur company at the Mary Ward Settlement and subsequently taking out a lease on the St Pancras People's Theatre of which she was the honorary secretary. She continued to run the theatre until it was destroyed in WW2.

Member of NCW. OBE.

She wrote pamphlets and articles related to her work.

211.

**Neville-Rolfe, Mrs Sybil Katherine (1886-1955)**

Father: Admiral of the Fleet Sir Cecil Burney; Mother: Lucinda M. Burnett.

Educated privately.

m. [1] Lieutenant A.C. Gotto, RN; [2], 1917, Clive Neville-Rolfe.

She worked at the shelter in Shaftesbury avenue run by Mme. Ruspini. She was involved with the sociological society and was one of the founders of the Eugenics Education Society. She campaigned for the appointment of the RC on Venereal Diseases and that its proceedings should be reported.

During WW1 she worked in the war savings department of the Treasury.

She belonged to various associations concerned with the welfare of women and children. In 1949 she became general secretary of the British Rheumatic Association.

172.

**Newall, Bertha Surtees (1877-1932)** [DNB]

Father J.S. Phillpotts; Mother: Marian Hadfield Cordery.

Educated Bedford Grammar School; and Girton.

m. 1931 Hugh Frank Newall.

She was attached to the British Legation in Stockholm 1916-19. In 1919 she became Principal of Westfield College; was Mistress of Girton 1922-25, and Research Fellow from 1925; Lecturer at Cambridge from 1926. She was a member of the Statutory Commissions on Cambridge [1923-27, and London [1926-28]. DBE, 1929.

She published on religion, drama and Scandinavian literature.

127., 168.

**Norman, Lady Florence Priscilla (d.1964)**

Father: Charles Benjamin Bright M'Laren, first Baron Aberconway; Mother:

Laura Pochin.

m. 1907, [as his second wife] Sir Henry Norman; one daughter; three sons. She was a member of the WLF. She was involved in the campaign for national insurance for married women and wrote and lectured in its support. She worked on schemes for the rehabilitation of disabled soldiers after WW1. She was mentioned in dispatches and awarded several medals, including the CBE. She was a trustee of the Imperial War Museum. She was a JP.

125.

Notman, Mrs J.

117.

Oldham, Miss Reta

Member of the NUWW.

103.

Orme, Eliza (1848-1937) [DNB]

Father: Charles; Mother: Eliza Andrews.

Educated Bedford College and University College, London, where she studied law [1871-76] and became the first woman LLB from the University of London in 1888.

She worked as a conveyancer, running her own business, from 1875-1904.

She was appointed senior lady assistant commissioner to the RC on Labour in 1892. She was a member of the WTUL and the NUWW and worked for the moderate suffrage movement.

She was a founding member of the WLF in 1886-7, but joined the WNLA when it split from the WLF in 1892, becoming president of the Deptford Branch c.1900. She was a vice-president of the WNLA.

She wrote on social and economic matters and a biography *Lady Fry of Darlington* [1898].

4.

Parkes, Mrs Dorothy C. Parkes

96.

Partner, Miss Mabel V.

96.

Paterson, Mary Muirhead (d.1941)

Her father was a boot manufacturer; her mother belonged to a prominent Glasgow family.

Educated at Queen Margaret College.

She travelled to the USA with her uncle inspecting industrial conditions - he was a socialist and a member of the ILP. She worked in Glasgow organising working girls' clubs and classes. She was a member of the WTUL and was also involved with the WIC and the WLL. She was appointed with May Abraham [see below] as factory inspector in 1893,



becoming deputy principal lady inspector; she was a National Health Insurance commissioner 1912-19, and during WW1 worked for the National Service Department, Women's Section organising women's labour in Scotland. She was an Edinburgh JP and vice chairman of the Scottish Justices and Magistrates Association, chairman of the District Nursing Association, member of the Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association and the League of Nations Union. Awarded CBE in 1920.

37., 38., 67., 80., 117.

**Peel, Dorothy C.** (c.1872-1934)

Father: Captain Richard Lane Baycliff; Mother: Henrietta Peel.

Educated at home.

m. Charles S. Peel, her cousin; two daughters.

She was a writer and journalist; edited various magazines and was managing director of Beeton & Co Ltd 1903-06; departmental editor of *Queen* and the *Daily Mail*.

She was appointed Director of Women's Service, Ministry of Food 1917-18.

She was also involved in the Women's Pioneer Housing Society; town planning and garden cities associations and the Welwyn Garden City Association.

She contributed to many daily and weekly papers and magazines and wrote novels, social history and cookery books. See her autobiography *Life's Enchanted Cup*, [1933].

96., 97., 138.

**Penrose, Emily** (1858-1942) [DNB]

Father: Frances Cranmer; Mother: Harriette Gibbes.

Educated at private school and Somerville College, Oxford where she obtained a first in literae humaniores - the first woman to do so.

In 1893 she became principal of Bedford College; of Royal Holloway College in 1898 and of Somerville in 1907. She was appointed Professor of Ancient History of University of London in 1894. She was a member of the NUWW and associated with various associations connected with women's education. In 1923 she was appointed a Statutory Commissioner for Oxford University.

She published in academic journals.

56., 78., 111.

**Phillipson, Mrs Mabel Russell Hilton** (1887-1951)

Father: Albert Russell.

m. [1] Stanley Rhodes, who died three months after the marriage. [2] 1917, Captain Hilton Phillipson; one daughter, two sons.

She worked in the theatre first as a box office clerk and from c.1907 as an actress.

Her husband was the Liberal MP for Berwick-on-Tweed, but was forced to resign after his agent had committed a technical error. She was proposed to succeed him, but would stand only as a Conservative candidate. She was elected in 1923 with a large majority. She was the first woman to be a

member of the Air Committee and in 1924 the only woman representative on a parliamentary delegation to Italy.

**184., 190., 198.**

**Phillips, Dr Marion (1881-1932)** [DNB]

Father: Phillip David; Mother: Rose Archer.

Educated Presbyterian Ladies' College; Melbourne University; University of London; she was a research scholar at LSE.

She was an investigator for the Webbs and then for the RC on Poor Laws 1905-09. She was appointed as organising secretary of the WTUL; and in 1911 succeeded M. Bondfield as general secretary of the WLL in 1911. She remained secretary during the rest of the life of the WLL, apart from a period in 1915 when Mary Longman took over.

She was elected to Kensington Borough Council in 1912, and in 1918 became Chief Woman Officer of the Labour Party. She was one of the founders of the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's organisations and became its secretary in 1917. She was a member of the Consumer Council where she worked as an investigator. She was a member of the NUWW.

She was editor of *Labour Woman* and wrote widely on labour matters.

**54., 83., 133., 142., p.358.**

**Phillips, Miss Mary Eppyn**

She was a doctor and a member of the NUWW. She was a member of the Industrial Law Committee.

**96., 102.**

Phillipotts, see Newall

**Phipps, Dame Jessie Wilton (1855-1934)**

Father: William Butler Duncan - she was born in New York.

m. 1876 William Wilton Phipps; two daughters, two sons..

Member of LCC Education Committee 1907-33 and chairman 1923-26;

Alderman 1913-31; Vice-Chairman LCC 1920-21. JP. DBE 1926.

**124.**

**Pickford, Hon. Mary Ada (d.1934)**

Father: William Pickford, Baron Sterndale, judge; Mother: Alice Mary Brooke.

Educated Wycombe Abbey School; Lady Margaret Hall.

She was a historian and a politician. She served on a number of international committees as an adviser on labour matters. She was elected as a Unionist MP for North Hammersmith in 1931. CBE 1929.

She published on history.

**189.**

**Pinsent, Mrs Ellen Frances (1866-1949)** [DNB]

Father: Rev. Richard Parker; Mother: Elizabeth Coffin.

m. 1888, Hume Chancellor Pinsent; two sons who died and one daughter

Hester, subsequently Lady Adrian.

Educated privately and at home.

She was co-opted as a member of Birmingham School Board in 1900, and appointed chairman of the Special Schools Sub-Committee in 1902. She was the first woman elected to Birmingham City Council in 1911. Member of NUWW. She was a pioneer in promoting legislation and measures for welfare of mentally ill. After the passing of the Mental Deficiency Act (1913) she was appointed honorary commissioner of Board of Control, becoming a senior commissioner in 1931. She retired in 1932 and was made DBE in 1937.

She wrote several novels with a moral theme and a number of articles on the subject of mental health.

14., 102., 145., 163.

**Player, Mrs H.D.**

m. Bernard.

She was a member of the WLL, NUWW and the WIC. In 1907 she had prepared evidence on its behalf for the Committee into Home Work and in 1909 was temporarily its honorary secretary. She was involved in the establishment of mother and baby clinics in London.

36.

**Pope-Hennessy, Dame Una (d.1949)**

Father: Sir Arthur Birth; Mother: Josephine Watts-Russell.

m. 1910, Major-General Ladislaus H.R. Pope-Hennessy; two sons.

She was a writer and was appointed a Lady of Grace of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in 1919. DBE 1920.

She published on travel, literary biographies, and criticism.

70.

**Pott, Gladys Sydney (1867-1961)**

Father: Ven. Alfred, Archdeacon of Berkshire; Mother: Emily Harriet Gibbs.

Education, private.

She was woman inspector of the women's branch of the Board of Agriculture, 1916-19. Her primary interest was in emigration and she became woman officer of the Overseas Settlement Department of the Dominions office and chairman of Society for Overseas Settlement of British Women 1920-1937. She held various other honorary positions. CBE 1937.

110.

**Powell, Miss Margaret Joyce (1888-1965)**

Father: Arthur C.; Mother: Margaret Hart.

Educated at home; Newnham 1907-10 and in Paris 1910-11.

She was a lecturer at Royal Holloway College 1911-17 and an assistant principal at the Ministry of Food 1917-20. From 1920-22 she was an assistant manager at James Powell & Sons [the family firm]. She was general secretary of the Auxiliary Movement 1922-25 and County Librarian for Surrey 1925-53. She held various honorary positions.

She published on classics and translated early English texts.

**142.**

**Power, Beryl Millicent le Poer (1891-1974)**

Father, Philip Ernest; a stockbroker; Mother: Mabel Grindley Clegg. Sister, Eileen Power, historian.

Educated Bournemouth Church High School; Bournemouth High School; Oxford High School for Girls; and Girton College where she was awarded a Fellowship but did not take it up because of her civil service appointment. She was an organiser and speaker for National Women's Suffrage Societies 1912-14 and a member of the NUWW. She became civil servant in 1915; worked as an Inspector, and then Deputy Chief Inspector for Board of Trade and Ministry of Labour, becoming Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Supply. She was awarded the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fellowship in 1926-27 to investigate the operation of Labour Laws in nine US states. She was in charge of the programme for the training and transfer of adults and juveniles from depressed areas 1932-38; Director of the Children's Overseas Reception Board in 1940 and in charge of air raid shelter feeding arrangements for the Ministry of Food in 1941. She became an assistant secretary at the Ministry of Supply in charge of the housing and welfare branch in 1942 where she remained until the end of the war. She was then seconded as an adviser to the Chinese Ministry of Social Affairs. She retired in 1951 and became involved in charitable causes, primarily housing for the elderly and education. She endowed a number of trusts and charities from her savings, particularly those concerned with research into racial intolerance. She also endowed a Feast at Girton. She published articles connected with her work, including one, 'Indian Labour Conditions' *Jnl. Royal Society of Arts*, June 1932, which was awarded the silver medal of the RSA.

**212.**

**Pratt, Edith Helen (b.1885)**

Father: John M. Pratt; Mother: Ellen Abercromby.

Educated Southlands School, Exmouth; Girton 1905-09.

She taught in various schools 1909-12 and lectured in philosophy at Cheltenham Ladies College 1912-14. She was welfare officer at the Bournville Works 1914-15 and staff inspector at the Ministry of Munitions 1915-17. She was deputy controller of the QMAAC 1917-18 and deputy commandant of the WRAF in 1918. She was appointed general inspector of women's agricultural education at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1920. She was involved in the Women's Institute movement and in young farmers' clubs.

She published on agriculture and country matters.

**182.**

**Primrose, Lady Victoria Alice Louise (1892-1927)**

Father: Edward G.V. Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby; Mother: Lady Alice M.O. Montagu.

m. [1] 1915 Rt. Hon. Neil James Archibald Primrose younger son of 5th Earl of Rosebery [d. 1917]. [2] 1919 Sir Malcolm Bullock.

81.

**Procter, Lady Helen Matilda**

Father: Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas A. Freeman.

m. 1897, Henry E.E., ktd. 1911; one daughter, one son.

She was involved with the YWCA movement and was a member of the NUWW. CBE.

152.

Pughe Jones, Dorothea [see Jones]

**Rackham, Clara (1875-1966)**

Father, Henry Samuel Tabor, a farmer; Mother Emma Frances Woodcock

m. 1901, Harris Rackham.

Educated St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Notting Hill High School and Newnham.

Her family were strong Liberals; she became a Socialist, was a Poor Law Guardian, a founder and President of the Cambridge WCG and a member of the COS. In 1915 she was appointed factory inspector in Lancashire; transferred to London. She was elected to Cambridge Borough Council in 1919 - the first woman socialist councillor; she later became an Alderman of the city and the county; chairman of the Labour party and a JP. She stood twice as Labour parliamentary candidate but not elected. Member of the NUWW/NCW; a founder and chairman of the Eastern Branch of the WEA in which she helped to create village colleges; she was a member of the RSPCA. She worked with Margery Fry in campaigns for penal reform. Before WW1 she was a member of the women's suffrage movement and became president of the Eastern Counties Federation of Suffrage Societies. She published a book and articles on factory law and penal reform.

141., 202.

**Rawlins, Morna Lloyd (1882-1969)**

Father: T.W. Rawlins; Mother: Caroline Stanley Murray.

Educated Cheltenham College; London School of Medicine for Women.

m. 1917, Commander F.C. Vaughan RN.

She worked as an anaesthetist and gynaecologist in various hospitals and specialised in treatment of venereal diseases.

She published on medicine and surgery.

154.

**Redfern, Miss Hilda**

Head mistress of Monyhull Colony School for defective children in Birmingham, and from 1927 an inspector at the Board of Control.

163.

**Reeves, Mrs Annie E.**  
**133., 142.**

**Reeves, Maud [Magdalen] S. Pember (d.1953)**  
 nee Stuart Robison  
 m. W. Pember Reeves (1857-19320; two daughters.  
 She was a Fabian and one of the founders of the Fabian Women's Group in 1908. She was a member of the WIC and the NUWW. During WW1 she worked at the Ministry of Food with Dorothy Peel.  
 She wrote on social conditions.  
**76., 94., 96., 99., 102.**

**Rhondda, Viscountess, Lady Margaret Haig Mackworth (1883-1958)**  
 [DNB]  
 Father: David A. Thomas, Lord Rhondda; Mother Sybil Margaret Haig.  
 Educated Notting Hill High School; St Leonard's School, St Andrews  
 m. 1908 Humphrey Mackworth, divorced 1923.  
 She was active in the WSPU. She worked as assistant to her father and succeeded him to the title in 1918. She was unable to take her seat in the House of Lords and campaigned for a change in the law. During WW1 she worked at the Ministry of National Service, as one of the organisers of enlistment for the WAAC. She founded *Time and Tide* in 1920 and was involved with NUSEC and the Six Point group, which campaigned for equal rights.  
 She published essays and an autobiography, *This was my World* [1933].  
**102, and p.358.**

**Richmond, Lady Elena (c.1884-1964)**  
 Father: William Gair Rathbone; Mother: Blanche Marie Luling.  
 Eleanor Rathbone [see below] was her aunt.  
 m.1913, Bruce Lyttelton (1871-1864); ktd. 1935.  
 She was a member of a philanthropic family and continued her father's active interest in the improvement of nursing services and the status of the profession. She worked with the Queen's Institute of District Nursing.  
**206.**

**Rimmer, Miss M.J.**  
**102.**

**Ritson, Muriel (1885-1980)**  
 Father: John Fletcher Ritson; Mother: Agnes Jane Catto.  
 Educated Greenock Academy and Germany.  
 She was a social worker and rent collector for the Glasgow Workmen's Dwelling company 1908-11; and secretary of the Women's Friendly Society (Scotland) 1911-1919. She was a member of the Scottish Board of Health 1919-29 and controller of health and pensions insurance at the Scottish Department of Health 1929-45. After 1930 she held several honorary

positions. She lived in Edinburgh.  
72., 146.

**Robertson, Miss Hannah**  
45. 57.

**Russell, Mrs Lilian (c.1884-1964)**

Father: Major Christopher P. Rigby; Mother: Matilda.

Educated at Queen's College.

m.1909 Charles E.B. Russell (d.1917).

She was a German scholar and worked as youth welfare worker. She was a member of the NUWW. She was an inspector in the Home Office children's department from 1917-1923. She did social work in Canada, Africa and the Far East, working in leper colonies. She worked extensively with Albert Schweitzer in Africa and translated his lectures and books into English and acted as his interpreter during his lecture tours. She published on social work; the treatment of young offenders and on Africa.

125.

**Ryan, Professor Mary (c.1873-1961)**

Father: Edward.

Educated Ursuline College, St Angela's, Cork; Dominican convent, Neuilly-sur-Seine.

She was elected junior fellow in modern literature at the Royal University of Ireland in 1898 and held the post of examiner in French from 1902-08. She was appointed lecturer in German at University College, Cork in 1909 and was professor of romance languages at the college from 1910-1938.

She published on French literature.

92.

**Salisbury, Marchioness of, Lady Cicely Alice Gore (1867-1955)**

Father: Arthur S.W.C. Fox, fifth Earl of Arran; Mother: Edith Jocelyn.

Educated at home.

m. 1887, James E.H. Gascoyne-Cecil, 4th marquess (1861-1947); two daughters, two sons.

She was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Alexandra 1907-1910 and an officer of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

105.

**Salman, Mrs Lavinia**

133., 142.

**Samuel, Lady Beatrice Miriam (1871-1959)**

Father: Ellis Abraham Franklin; Mother: was a sister of Samuel Montagu [see Lily Montagu, above].

One of the leading Jewish families.

m. 1897, Herbert, first Viscount Samuel [her first cousin]; one daughter, three sons.

She did little outside work until her husband was appointed the first High Commissioner for Palestine in 1920, when she developed an interest in public and philanthropic work that continued after their return to England in 1925. She was president of the Union of Jewish Women 1928-1943. She was a member of the NUWW.

**64.**

**Samuel, Dame Louise Gilbert**

She was a member of the Conservative and Unionist Franchise Association and of the NUWW. She was a member of Chelsea borough council.

**130., 134., 145.**

**Sanderson Furniss, Mrs Averil D. - see Furniss**

**Scarlett-Synge, Dr Ella Campbell (b.1864)**

Father: William Frederick Scarlett, third Baron Abinger; Mother Helen Magruder. One of her sisters was Evelina Haverfield.

Educated mainly at home; studied music in Vienna.

m. 1901, Lt. Percy Hamilton Synge, but was divorced soon afterwards.

She qualified as a doctor in Brussels; and worked as personal physician to Emperor of Korea. She moved to South Africa c.1901 and worked in Boer refugee camps; she was the first woman doctor to practise in the Orange Free State. She practised as a doctor in London 1905-06 when she became friendly with Mrs Pankhurst and was active in the WSPU; she was Obstetric Surgeon, New City Hospital, Edmonton, Canada 1907-1911, and Medical Officer for Life Insurance to the Ladies of the Maccabees Edmonton Lodge, No. 1; she worked in Seattle, USA 1912; in Oregon 1913; and returned to Canada and worked in Vancouver BC 1914. She formed an all female field hospital in 1915 and went to France, but was not approved of by the military authorities so went to Serbia. As that country was being taken over by Austrian army they escaped to Greece with the defeated Serbian army. After the war she became Medical Officer of Health in Batochina, Serbia, and subsequently returned to London where she held the same position in Peckham, c.1921. She retired in 1927 and moved to Florence.

**13.**

**Scharlieb, Mary Ann Dacomb (1845-1930) [DNB]**

Father: William C. Bird; Mother: Mary Dacomb, died when MDS was a few days old.

Educated at boarding schools in Manchester, New Brighton and St John's Wood. m. 1865, William Mason Scharlieb, a barrister; 1 daughter and 2 sons.

She accompanied her husband to India in 1866 and entered Madras Medical School with 3 other women (Miss Dora White; Miss D'Abreu; Miss Mitchell) and qualified in 1877. She continued her medical training in London and Vienna. She returned to India in 1884 and established



Women's Hospital in Madras, where she also had a large private practice. She returned to England in 1887 and graduated as M.D. from London University in 1888 and continued to practice and lecture in London. She was a member of various bodies connected with social and health matters; held eugenicist views. Member of NUWW. She published and lectured prodigiously on medical and moral matters, and wrote an autobiography *Reminiscences* [1924].

47.

**Shirley, Mrs Elizabeth**

160.

**Sidgwick, Eleanor Mildred (1845-1936)** [DNB]

Father: James Maitland Balfour; Mother: Lady Blanche Cecil, daughter of 2nd Marquess of Salisbury.

Educated at home, largely by her mother who encouraged her interest in mathematics and science.

She acted as hostess for her brother Arthur, before her marriage to Professor Henry Sidgwick in 1875. At Cambridge she was involved in scientific research with her brother in law Lord Rayleigh and with spiritualism. Member of Society for Psychical Research and was its president in 1908 and its secretary from 1907-1932. She could have read for a degree but abandoned the idea to devote more time to the management of Newnham College, of which she and her husband were co-founders; she was the College Treasurer from 1878 until 1927, became Vice Principal in 1880 and Principal 1892-1900. She was primarily concerned with education, but was also involved with Cambridge Charity Organisation Society and poor law work. With Louise Creighton she also founded a women's discussion group in Cambridge - the Ladies' Dining Club. She was a member of NUWW, and supported female suffrage through constitutional means as a member of the Conservative and Unionist Suffrage Association.

She published a number of books and pamphlets on education, suffrage, and psychical research.

2., 6. 23.

**Simm, Mrs Elizabeth Emma [Lisbeth]**

Father: George Dodds.

m. 1895, Matthew Turnbull, MP for Wallsend (d.1928).

She was a leading member of and organiser for the WLL. She was a member of the NUWW.

131.

**Simon, Lady Shena Dorothy (1883-1972)**

Father: John Wilson; Mother: Jane Boyd Potter.

Educated at home; Newnham College; LSE.

m. 1912, Ernest Emil Darwin Simon; two sons, one daughter who died in 1929.

She was a member of Manchester City Council 1924-33. Member of NUWW.

She published books, pamphlets and articles on education and local government.

211.

**Simpson**, Dame Florence Edith Victoria Burleigh Leach (1874-1956)

Father: Colonel W. FitzAlan Way.

m. 1922, Edward P. Simpson.

She was commandant of the cooker section of the Women's Legion 1915-17. She was appointed controller of inspection of the WAAC 1917-18 and Controller-in-Chief of the QMAAC 1918-20.

96.

**Smith**, Miss Dymphna

96.

**Smith**, Miss Helen

Lady Superintendent of the Borough Polytechnic Institute. Member of the NUWW.

93.

**Smith**, Lady Mabel Florence Harriett (1870-1951)

Father: Viscount Milton; Mother: Laura M.T. Beauclerk.

m. 1899, Colonel William M. Smith.

She promoted workers' rights and was a member of the Labour party, a county councillor, school governor and JP. She was a member of the Church Assembly and ran a Sunday school in her home in Sheffield. She was a member of the NUWW.

167.

**Snowden**, Ethel (1881-1951)

Father: Richard Annakin.

Educated at home and Edge Hill College, Liverpool, where she joined the Christian Socialist movement.

m. 1905, Philip Snowden (Liberal/Labour MP)

She worked as a teacher in Leeds before her marriage, but afterwards did no further paid work. She was a committed socialist and feminist, worked for women's suffrage; member of the NUWW; and of the Fabian Society. She was a member of first Board of Governors of BBC and associated with other arts organisations, especially Covent Garden Opera Syndicate. She lectured extensively and was vice-president of National Education Association.

She published a number of books and articles on feminist and socialist politics.

151., 159.

**Somerton, Mrs Kate L.**  
**66.**

**Sparks, Miss Beatrice M. (d. 1953)**

Father: Rev. W.R. Sparks.

Educated St Hugh's College, Oxford, where she became an honorary fellow.

She was head mistress of Wisbech High School 1905-13, and of Colston Girls' School Bristol 1914-22; Principal of Cheltenham Ladies College 1922-36. She was a member of the Burnham Committee, and president of the Association of Head Mistresses 1925-27.

**113.**

**Spencer, Miss M.G.**

Secretary of the Central Bureau for the Employment of Women. Member of the NUWW. OBE.

She wrote on women's work.

**53., 93.**

**Splatt, Miss Emma E.J.**

**96.**

**Spurgeon, Prof. Caroline Frances Eleanor (1869-1942) 24 Oct**

Father Captain Christopher Spurgeon.

Educated Cheltenham College; Dresden; Paris; King's College and University College, London. She gained a first class degree in English from Oxford in 1899 and was awarded a D.Litt from the University of Paris in 1911.

She was a university lecturer, becoming Professor of English Literature of the University of London 1913-29, where she was head of English at Bedford College. She held various visiting professorships and was a member of the British Educational Mission to America in 1918. She was President of the International Federation of University Women 1920-24. She wrote and edited literary texts in French and English, and contributed to many academic journals.

**114.**

**Squire, Rose Elizabeth (1861-1938)**

Father: William, MD of Harley Street.

Educated privately at home.

She gained Diploma of National Health Society in 1893 and Sanitary Inspector's Certificate in 1894. She was appointed Sanitary Inspector for Kensington Vestry in 1893 where she worked with Lucy Deane. She joined the women's factory inspectorate at the Home Office in 1896; took over Lucy Deane's work during 1901 when she was appointed to the Concentration Camps Inquiry; and became senior lady inspector in 1903 and deputy principal lady inspector in 1912. She was seconded to the RC on the Poor Laws as a special investigator. She was director of women's welfare,

Ministry of Munitions 1918-19; and of women's training, Ministry of Labour 1919-20. She was awarded OBE in 1918. She was made a principal in the Home Office in 1921 - the first woman to attain this rank. She was a consultant during the preparation of the 1922 Factory Bill. Retired in 1926. She was a member of the NUWW and of many other committees and associations concerned with social reform. She was involved in the Ranyard Mission, Russell Square. She wrote widely on industrial questions and an autobiography *Thirty Years in the Public Service*, [1927].  
68., 69., 139.

**Steele, Miss A.T.**  
101.

**Steele, Miss Elizabeth**  
Assistant mistress.  
92.

**Stephen, Miss Jessie (b.1893)**  
Her father was a Glasgow tailor and she was one of 11 children. She had little formal schooling and although she wanted to be a teacher had to work in domestic service. She organised the Scottish Domestic Workers Union c.1910 and subsequently was involved with the English Domestic Workers Union when she moved to London. She became an organiser with Sylvia Pankhurst's suffrage movement in the East End and was elected a borough councillor for Bermondsey at the age of 21. She was a member of the ILP and contested several parliamentary elections. She worked as a writer, clerk and secretary and was an organiser for the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union and tutor for the National Council of Labour Colleges. In later life she lived in Bristol where she was a member of Bristol city council.  
96.

**Stephenson, Miss Katharine J. (1874-1953)**  
Father: Sir Augustus F.W. Keppel Stephenson; Mother: Eglantine Pleydell-Bouverie.  
Educated at home.  
She was principal of St Gabriel's Training College and became an alderman on Wiltshire county council. She held various honorary positions, including governor of Godolphin School, Salisbury. CBE 1927. JP and member of the NUWW.  
206.

**Stevenson, Flora Clift (1839-1905)**  
Father: James, chemical manufacturer; Mother: Jane Stewart.  
Educated at private school, classes at Edinburgh Association for University Education of Women.  
She began her public work as a member of the Association for Improving

the Condition of the Poor, continued to be involved in educational issues, founded a school with her sister Louisa [see below]; she was the first Scots woman to be elected to a School Board [Edinburgh School Board 1873]; became chairman in 1900, and served on the Board until her death. She was made an honorary fellow of the Educational Institute, Scotland. She was vice-president of Women's Free Trade Union; and a vice-president of the NUWW. She was a member of the National Society for Women's Suffrage and a vice-president of the Women's Liberal Unionist Association. She was a friend of E.S. Haldane and Helen Kerr - with Kerr both Stevenson sisters belonged to the Edinburgh Social Union and were involved with its housing programme, based on Octavia Hill's scheme. She published articles on housing and social matters. Her work and that of her sister, Louisa (1835-1908) recorded in a privately published memoir: *Recollections* [1914].

3., 12.

**Stewart-Sandeman, Dr Laura (d.1909)**

Father: Col. Frank.

She qualified as a doctor in 1903 and was medical officer of the Scottish Women's hospital in WW1 and controller of medical services in the RAMC and the QMAAC. She worked as a doctor in Aberdeen and was particularly involved in services for women and children. She contested North Aberdeen as a Unionist candidate in 1924 and 1928, but was unsuccessful.

120.

**Stirling, Mrs Margaret Mary (1881-1973)**

Father: Simon Fraser, 15th Baron Lovat; Mother: Alice Mary Blundell.

m. 1910, Brigadier Archibald; six children.

She acted as secretary to her brother, Simon, when he raised the Lovat scouts in the South African War. She supported Lord Roberts' campaign for national military service. She used the family home at Keir for a hospital in WW1 and WW2. She supported Highlands Home industries and the Perthshire Nursing Association. She founded a home for unmarried mothers and the St Vincent's Orthopaedic Hospital at Pinner. She was also involved in various progressive farming projects.

117.

**Strachey, Lady Anne [Amy] (c1866-1927)**

Father C.T. Simpson; Mother: Minnie Senior.

m. 1887, John St. Loe Strachey, editor of *The Spectator*. One daughter, one son.

She was involved in child welfare work, especially the development of child psychology services. She was one of the earliest proponents of the use of psychiatric assessments for dealing with juvenile crime. She was one of the founders of the Child Guidance Council. After her husband's death in 1927 she began a literary career. She was OBE and JP and a member of the NUWW.

She published on services for children, novels, and a memoir of her

husband.

**152.**

**Streatfeild, Mrs Lucy Deane** (c.1870-1950)

Father Col. Bonar Deane; Mother Hon. Lucy Boscawen.

m. 1911, Granville Edward Stewart Streatfeild.

She trained as a health worker and lecturer for National Health Society and became sanitary inspector in Kensington in 1894 and factory inspector in 1895. She resigned through ill health in 1906, but continued voluntary public work after her marriage. She was the first woman organising officer for the National Health Insurance Commission, and organised infant welfare centres in London; and was a member of various trade boards. During WWI she was a member of executive committee of the Women's Land Army in Kent. She was one of the first women JPs and was a member of Kent County Council. She had attended meetings of the ILP in her youth, but remained Liberal in her politics. She supported female suffrage but was not active in the suffrage movement. She was a member of the University Women's Club and of the NUWW.

CBE 1918.

She published a number of articles on aspects of factory work and industrial legislation.

**13., 31., 40., 62., 103., 174., and p.358.**

**Sutherland, Miss Annabella**

**89.**

**Symons, Madeleine** (1895-1957)

Father: George Todd Symons.

Educated at Birklands, St Albans; Newnham College 1913-16.

m. 1940, Professor Harold Robinson.

She joined the WTUL on leaving university, and in 1918 became a member of its Executive Committee. She was also a member of the NFWW and its negotiations officer from 1916 until it amalgamated with the National Union of General and Municipal Workers for whom she held the same position in its women's section. She campaigned for fair wages and unemployment benefits for women and was known as one of the best trades union negotiators.

Between 1922 and 1923 she was on the Executive Committee of the Labour Party; and in 1925-6 was the Representative of the Staff side on the Civil Service Arbitration Court. She was a JP and became chairman of the West London Juvenile Courts. She was a member of NUWW.

She wrote and lectured on women's employment.

**162., 177., and p.358.**

**Talbot, Mary Caroline, Lady Edmund** (1859-1938)

Father: M.A. Bertie, 7th Earl of Abingdon; mother: Caroline Teresa Towneley.

m. 1879, Lord Edmund Bernard Talbot, MP, first Viscount FitzAlan of Derwent; three daughters, one son.

She was chairman of Women's Branch of the National Unionist Association, Eastern Area c.1921. She was chairman of the Women's Advisory Committee of Conservative Party. She was a member of the NUWW and a JP.

**36., 73., 80.**

**Talbot, Hon. Mrs Lavinia (d.1939)**

Father: George William, fourth Baron Lyttelton; Mother: Mary Glynne.

Educated at home by governesses. Her sister was Lucy Cavendish, [see above].

m. 1870, Edward S. Talbot; two daughters, three sons.

She did philanthropic work for a variety of associations. She was a member of the NUWW.

**8.**

**Talbot, Dame Meriel (1866-1956)**

Father: John Gilbert Talbot; Mother: Meriel Lyttelton.

Her aunt was Lucy Cavendish [see above].

Educated at Kensington High School.

She held a number of honorary positions, including Secretary to the Victoria League 1901-16, and Lambeth COS, before taking up a series of advisory posts with the Ministry of Agriculture. She was director of the women's branch of the Board of Agriculture's food production department, where her deputy was her aunt, Edith Lyttelton. She was appointed Woman Adviser for the Ministry of Agriculture in 1920. In 1921 she became intelligence officer of the Overseas Settlement Department; and was an adviser for the BBC. Chairman of the London Council for the Welfare of Women and Girls from 1935-1951. She was a member of the NUWW.

She was awarded the CBE in 1918 and created DBE in 1920.

**175., 204.**

**Tanner, Miss Emmeline Mary (1876-1955)**

Father: S.T. Tanner.

Educated privately.

She was an Assistant Mistress at Sherborne School of Girls 1905-09 and became the first Head Mistress of Nuneaton High School 1910-20. Head Mistress of Bedford High School 1920-24 and of Roedean 1924-47. She was the Chairman of the Committee of the Association of Head Mistresses 1923-25, and its President 1937-39. She was a member of the Board of Education Consultative Committee 1920-30, and Chairman of the Joint Committee of Four Secondary Associations 1940-42. Created DBE in 1947.

**127., 168., 188., 201.**

**Taylor, Fanny Isabel (d.1947)**

Father: William Robert; Mother: Mary Gardner King.

Educated Sutton High School; LSE.

She was appointed a factory inspector at the Home Office in 1909 and became superintending inspector in 1930 and deputy inspector in 1933.

She held various advisory positions in the UK and internationally. CBE  
1946.

**96.**

**Tennant, Mrs May (1869-1946)** [DNB]

Father: Dr George W. Abraham, a barrister; Mother: Margaret Curtin.

m. 1896, Harold J. Tennant [a Liberal MP and member of Asquith's governments]; one daughter, three sons [eldest son killed in WW1].

Educated at home by her father.

At the age of 18 after her father's death and the loss of her family's money she left Dublin where she had been brought up and went to London, where she worked as secretary to Lady Dilke, becoming involved with labour issues. She was treasurer of the Women's Trade Union League. She was one of the four women appointed as Assistant Commissioners on the RC on Labour in 1892 and one of the first woman factory inspectors from 1893.

She resigned after her marriage in 1896 to H.J. Tennant (Liberal MP), but continued unpaid work particularly during World War I. She was chief adviser on women's welfare in Ministry of Munitions; and director of the Women's Section in the National Service Department. During WW2 she worked for the RAF Benevolent Fund. Because of her government employment she was not politically active, but was a member of the WNLA and became involved with the Labour party in 1920s. She was a member of the NUWW.

She wrote on factory legislation, and women's working conditions. See also V. Markham [1949].

**1., 5., 18., 26., 48., 51., 54., 68., 81.**

**Thomas, Miss**

**102.**

**Thorburn, Miss M.M.**

Matron of the county of London (Horton) Mental Hospital.

**145.**

**Towers, Agnes Elizabeth (b.1892)**

Father: Rev. Thomas, Congregational minister; Mother: Mary Jane Gorrill.

Educated at King Edward VI High School, Birmingham and Girton College.

She trained as a surgeon and gynaecologist and worked in Birmingham

1918-21, and in Shanghai 1921-38. During 1940-41 she was an

obstetrician in a Blackpool Maternity Home and from 1941 worked in general practice in Rugby.

She published on gynaecology and general medicine.

**65.**

**Townsend, Miss Pauline D.**

NUWW.

**10.**



Trustram Eve, Lady Fanny Jean - see Eve

**Tuckwell, Gertrude Mary (1861-1951)** [DNB]

Father: William was a radical socialist Church of England priest. Mother: Rosa Strong, sister of Lady Dilke.

Educated at home by governess and her father, and teacher training college in Liverpool; in 1882 attended Bishop Otter College, qualifying in 1884.

She worked as an elementary school teacher for London School Board 1885-1892 and then as secretary to her aunt, Lady Dilke. She was honorary secretary and from 1904, president to the WTUL until its amalgamation with TUC in 1921; she worked with May Tennant, Adelaide Anderson, Mary Macarthur, Lucy Deane. She helped in formation of Industrial Law Committee and was instrumental in passing of Trade Boards Act of 1909. She was president of the Women Public Health Officers Association during the 1920s. She was the first woman JP in London. She was one of the founders of the Magistrates' Association, and chairman of the National Association of Probation Officers. She was an active member of the Labour party and a member of the NUWW.

She wrote articles and books on labour questions, especially women's work; and biographies.

22., 80., 105., 165.

**Tuke, Dame Margaret Jansen (1862- 1947)**

Father: James Hack Tuke, a banker and philanthropist; Mother: Elizabeth Jansen, d. when MT was 7.

Educated at home by her father and at St John's Withdean, Brighton; Newnham College.

She worked as Lecturer in Modern Languages at Newnham 1890-95, and was a Fellow from 1905-36. She was tutor to women students and lecturer in French at Bristol University 1905-07. She was appointed principal of Bedford College 1907 becoming a Fellow in 1930. She was a member of University of London Senate 1911-29. She superintended the expansion of Bedford College and its move to a new site with virtual doubling of students, and in 1939 published a history of the College. In politics she was a Conservative.

She wrote on educational and academic matters. See also Geraldine Jebb 'Dame Margaret Tuke' [1953].

25., 33. 45., 74., 96., 103., 148.

**Tullibardine, Lady Katharine** - see Atholl

**Unwin, Miss Hermione**

She was a member of the NUWW and of the Froebel Society. She came from Shipley, Yorkshire.

90.

**Varley, Julia (1871-1952)**

Father: Richard, an engine feeder in a cotton mill; Mother: Martha Ann

**Alderson.**

Educated at St Andrew's School, Listerhills, Bradford and Quaker Sunday school.

She began work at the age of 10 as a half-timer in a Bradford cotton mill. She became a union organiser at 14. She worked for the WTUL and after its absorption into the men's union movement she was the chief woman organiser for the TGWU. She was part of the militant suffrage movement and was imprisoned twice. She investigated poor law conditions by disguising herself as a tramp. She was a member of the TUC general council from 1921-1935.

She published in labour and socialist journals.

**129., 137., 152.**

**Walker, Jane Harriet (1859-1938)**

Father: John.

Educated Southport; London School of Medicine for Women; Vienna.

She was in general practice until 1901 when she became a consultant, specialising in TB. She pioneered open air treatment on consumption in England from 1892, and opened the East Anglian Sanatorium in 1901 [where Edmund Garrett was a patient]. She was one of the founders of the Medical Women's Federation and became its honorary secretary, and was a member of many local and Government committees. She was a member of the NUWW.

She wrote books and articles on medicine, especially the treatment of consumption.

**44.**

**Wallas, Katharine Talbot (1864-1944)**

Father: Rev. Gilbert Innes Wallas. Mother: Frances Talbot Peacock.

Sister of Graham Wallas (see *DNB*) and aunt of Helen Wodehouse (see below).

Educated Girton College.

She was co-opted on to the education Committee of the LCC in 1910-13 and 1934-37. She was an Alderman of the LC from 1913-34 and was created CBE in 1933. She was a member of the NUWW.

**101., 173.**

**Ward, Miss A. Helen**

A member of the NUWW, the NUWSS, and of the Women's International League.

**166.**

**Ward, Mary Augusta [Mrs Humphry Ward] (1851-1920) [DNB]**

Father: Thomas Arnold; Mother: Julia Sorell

Educated at home and at boarding schools.

m. 1872, T.H. Ward; two daughters, one son.

She was the first secretary of Somerville College in 1879. She founded a settlement in 1890, known as the Passmore Edwards settlement, worked to promote playgrounds and children's and mother's health centres. She was a leading anti-suffragist and founded the Anti-Suffrage League in 1908.

She was a member of the NUWW, but left when it took a resolution to support women's suffrage.

She published novels and pamphlets on social and political matters and was one of the best-selling novelists of her time.

105.

**Wark, Anna Elisa** (d.1944)

Father: James. She was from a Presbyterian Northern Ireland family.

Educated at Strand House School; Magee College, Londonderry and Royal University of Ireland at Belfast.

She worked in training colleges in Darlington and Saffron Walden, and became the vice-principal of the LCC Day Training College. She was appointed HM Inspector for schools in 1912 and succeeded Maude Lawrence as chief woman inspector in 1921. She retired in 1927. She was a member of various governing bodies, including that of the Froebel Institute. She was interested in the work of Margaret Macmillan in Deptford and gave it official encouragement.

She wrote on education, especially on the teaching of mathematics.

153., 182., 200.

**Waterston, Jane Elizabeth** (1843-1932)

Father Charles Waterston, manager of Caledonian bank; Mother Agnes Webster. The family belonged to Established Church.

Educated at home by governess and at Inverness Royal Academy.

Licenciate of Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, 1888; MD at Brussels, 1888; Certificate in Psychological Medicine of the Medico Psychological Association, 1888.

Against her family's wishes, she became a missionary for the Free Church of Scotland, and was appointed Superintendent of the Lovedale Girls' Institution in South Africa in 1866. She decided to train as a doctor and resigned from Lovedale in May 1873. She began her medical studies in Edinburgh in 1874, and from October 1874 was one of the first 14 students at the London School of Medicine for Women [founded by Sophia Jex Blake]. Her friendship with the Garrett family is assumed to have begun at this time; she was also friendly with Mary Scharlieb. She qualified in Ireland in 1879; returned to South Africa in Sept 1879, working briefly at the Livingstonia Mission, returning to Lovedale in 1880. She left there in 1883 to begin a private practice as the first woman doctor in Cape Town, where she remained for the rest of her life, apart from a brief return to Britain in 1888 to gain more medical qualifications [see above]. She became active in public life, lecturing on medicine and working as a medical inspector of various government institutions, and was increasingly involved in political matters. Edmund Garrett was a close friend from his arrival in Cape Town in 1895, and she gave him active public support during his election campaign in 1898, which attracted some hostility towards her. Through his friendship, she also came to know Milner for whom she had great admiration. From 1905-06 she was president of Cape of Good Hope (Western) Branch of the British Medical Association; and in 1925 was elected the second woman

fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland; in 1929 she was awarded honorary LLD of University of Cape Town, but declined DBE.  
13.

**Watt, Nurse J.P.**  
98.

**Webb, Mrs Beatrice (1858-1943)** [DNB]  
Father: Richard Potter. Mother: Lawrencina Heyworth  
Educated at home.  
m. 1892, Sidney Webb.

In the 1880s she worked in East End of London as rent-collector; she was researcher for Charles Booth; and trained herself in methods of social investigation. She was a Fabian; one of founders of LSE, and member of Labour Party. She was a noted political hostess. After her work on the RC on Poor Laws, she and Sidney inaugurated a national campaign for break-up of existing system. She was initially opposed to female suffrage and had signed the anti-suffrage manifesto written by Mrs Humphry Ward in 1889, but in 1906 wrote to Millicent Fawcett to record her changed views. She was involved with NUWW in its initial years, but left it during the 1890s, and gave her support to the WIC.

She wrote on social and labour history, often with her husband, and an autobiography *My Apprenticeship*, and diaries.  
17., 52., 77., 84., 85., 87., 104., 105.

**White, Henrietta Margaret (d. 1936)**  
Father Henry White.

Educated Alexandra College, Dublin; Newnham College.  
She was Principal of Alexandra College 1890-1932. She was president of the Irish Branch of the International Federation of University Women 1925-27 and 1927-29; and of the Irish School Mistresses Association. She was a member of the Irish Registration Council 1915-30. She was a member of the NUWW.

She published articles on education, social service and horticulture.  
92.

**White, Miss M.M.**  
123.

**Whyatt, Miss Rosalind (b.1888)**  
Educated at elementary school.

She was a trade union organiser, a member of the ILP and the Labour party.  
96.

**Wilkins, Louisa (1873-1929)**  
Father: Arthur Trevor Jebb; Mother: Eglantyne Jebb.  
m. 1907, Roland Wilkins; 2 daughters.  
Educated privately and at Newnham.

She was the first woman to take the Agricultural Diploma at Cambridge. She ran the home farm on the family estate and became an authority on smallholdings. She travelled across Asia Minor to Baghdad in 1901-02. She campaigned for land reform. She was a member of the Government Agricultural Organisation Society and of the Executive Committee of the Women's Farm and Garden Association from 1915. From this Association the Women's National Land Service Corps was created in 1916, of which she became president. It became the Women's Land Army in 1917. At this time she was also a member of the Women's Section at Board of Agriculture. She was awarded the OBE in 1921. She wrote on smallholdings and allotments, and travel books.  
80., 107.

**Wilkinson, Ellen Cicely (1891-1947)** [DNB]

Father: Richard; Mother: Ellen Wood.

Educated at elementary and secondary schools; and Manchester University. She was the national woman organiser of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers from 1915-25. She joined the ILP in 1912 and was a member of the Communist party from 1920-24. She was elected as a Labour MP in 1924 and was parliamentary private secretary to Susan Lawrence 1929-31. She was minister of education 1945-47. She published on politics.

179., 190., 213.

**Williams, Miss G. Perrie**

She held a doctorate of the University of Paris.

114.

**Wilson, Mrs. Annie C.I.**

Member of ESU.

98.

**Wilson, Mona (1872-1954)**

Father: Rev. James Maurice Wilson; Mother: Annie Elizabeth Moore.

Educated Clifton High School; St Leonard's School, St Andrews; Newnham College.

She joined the WTUL as its secretary, and investigated social conditions in West Ham c.1902 and Dundee [in association with Miss M.L. Walker in 1904]; then joined the Civil Service becoming a National Health Insurance Commissioner 1912-19, where she was paid at the same rate as men and was then 'the highest paid woman in state employment'. [*Times*, 30 Oct 1954, p.8] She was a member of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board 1918-29. She was friendly with Lady Dilke, G. Tuckwell and M. Macarthur with whom she worked in the WTUL. She was a member of various trade boards after the passing of the Trades Boards Act. She retired to Wiltshire in 1919 and was a JP there.

She had a distinguished literary career, writing a number of biographies as well as books and essays on industrial and employment matters.

**19., 41. 46., 63., 80., 88.**

**Wilson Fox**, Hon. Mrs. Eleanor Birch (d.1963)

Father: George Sclater-Booth, first Baron Basing, Conservative Cabinet minister (see *DNB*); Mother: Lydia Caroline Birch.

m. 1898, Henry, MP; one son.

She held various advisory positions. In WW1 she was chairman of the Hackney War Pensions Committee and of the South African Comforts Committee. CBE 1918. She was involved with Unionist political work and female emigration.

**157., 199.**

**Wintringham**, Margaret (1879-1955)

Father: David Longbottom.

Educated at Keighley Girls' Grammar School and Bedford College.

m. 1903, Thomas Wintringham, MP.

She worked as a teacher and became headmistress of school in Grimsby and was involved with various committees in Lincolnshire connected with agriculture and rural conditions; active in WLF. Her husband was Liberal MP for Louth and she was elected to that seat as an Independent Liberal after his death in 1921, and was the second woman and the first Liberal woman to take her seat in Parliament. She lost the seat in 1924; stood again in 1929 and 1935 but was not re-elected. She was a JP and county councillor.

She was a member of the NUWW in the early 20th century, but seems not to have been actively involved until after her husband's death. In Parliament she had particular interests in the furtherance of free, universal education, and in housing and agriculture. She was a member of many Government and other committees after she left Parliament.

She published articles in women's and Liberal journals.

**144., 150., 152., 182., 209., 215.**

**Wodehouse**, Professor Helen Marion (1880-1964)

Father: Rev. Philip John; Mother: Marion Bryan Wallas [sister of Katharine, (see above) and of Graham Wallas (see *DNB*)].

Educated Notting Hill High School, Girton 1898-1902. D.Phil, Birmingham 1906.

She lectured in philosophy at the University of Birmingham 1903-11. She was the principal of Bingley Training College, Yorkshire 1911-19 and professor of education at the University of Bristol 1919-31. She was Mistress of Girton 1931-42. She was a member of several local authority education committees and served on a number of governing bodies for schools and colleges. She was president of the British Federation of University Women 1942-44.

She published on philosophy and ethics and was a frequent contributor to the *International Journal of Ethics*.

**153.**

**Wood, Mrs. Ethel M. (c.1876-1970)**

Father: Quintin Hogg; Mother: Alice Graham.

m. 1907, Major Herbert Frederic Wood; one daughter.

She continued her father's involvement with the Polytechnic Institute in Regent Street, which he had founded in 1882. She was a governor and president of its women's section. She was a member of the NUWW. CBE 1920. During WW2 she was the honorary secretary to the Committee on Woman Power.

She wrote memoirs and biographies, including one of her father.

**152.**

**Wootton, Mrs Barbara (1897-1988)** [DNB]

Father: James Adams; Mother: Adela Marion Kensington. Both parents were classical scholars at Cambridge.

Educated at home; Perse High School, Cambridge, and Girton College.

m. [1] 1917, Captain John Wootton, who was killed five weeks later. [2] 1935, George Wright (d.1964).

She was a research student at LSE and in 1920 was appointed lecturer in economics at Girton. She was an economic researcher for the TUC and the Labour Party Research Department 1922-25. In 1926 she became principal of Morley College and in 1927 director of studies for extra-mural students of the University of London. From 1948-1952 she held the post of Professor of Social Studies of the University of London. She became a magistrate in 1925 and held various honorary positions and served on four Royal Commissions. She was given a peerage in 1958 and became the first woman Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords.

She wrote on economics, social work and social policy and an autobiography, *In a world I never made* [1967].

**164.**

**Younger, Miss Jessie Alice (1871-1948)**

Father George a yarn agent of Glasgow; Mother Margaret Tannahill.

Educated Park School, Glasgow; Girton.

She was secretary of the Scottish Women's Liberal Federation 1894-1912.

She was a first class Departmental Officer; and organising Officer, Ministry of Labour Employment Department, Scotland 1912-1931, and was secretary to the Scottish committee on women's training and employment during the early 1920s.

OBE 1918.

**71., 117.**

**Zimmern, Miss Elsie M.**

She ran a nursery training school in Hampstead and was a member of the Royal Institute of Public Health, the WIC and the NUWW. She was a member of the executive committee of the International Council of Women.

**96.**

**Appendix 2****British Government Committees which had women members  
1893-1930**

Dates at the beginnings of the entries are of the appointment and report of the inquiries. The chairman's name is given in each case, followed by the number of members and the names of the women members. The women's names are given in full [or as fully as possible] on their first entry; in subsequent entries only the surname and initials of first names are given. Married women appointees' own christian names never appear in warrants before 1919, but have been given here for easier identification. Publication details of the report are given in most cases; some committees did not produce reports and some reports could not be traced. Only the membership at the time of the committees' initial appointments is given. In some cases of large semi-permanent committees only the number of women on the original committee has been included.

The entries are grouped alphabetically under the year of first appointment; the alphabetical listing does not reflect the date order of the appointments.

Royal Commissions and Select Committees have been underlined.

RC = Royal Commission; DC = Departmental Committee; Chmn. = Chairman; IDC = Inter-Departmental Committee; SC = Select Committee.

**1893****1. 1893-94: DC on Lucifer Match Works**

Chmn. W. Dawkins Cramp; 4 members.

Miss May Abraham.

1893-94, xvii, C.7236.

**1894****2. RC on Secondary Education**

Chmn. J. Bryce; 16 members.

Dr. Sophie Bryant; Lady Frederick Cavendish; Mrs Eleanor Sidgwick.

1895, xliii-xlix, C.7862; 1896, xlvi, C.8077.

**1895****3. DC on Habitual Offenders in Scotland**

Chmn. Sir C. Cameron; 6 members.

Miss Flora C. Stevenson.

1895, xxxvii, C.7753-1.

**4. DC on Prisons**

Chmn. H.J. Gladstone; 7 members.

Miss Eliza Orme.

1895, lvi, C.7702.



**1896****5. DC on Dangerous Trades**

Chmn. H.J. Tennant; 3 members.

M. Abraham.

1896, xxxiii, C.8149; 1897, xvii, C.8522; 1899, xii, C.9073, 9420, 9509.

**6. Committee on Distribution of Arts and Science Grants**

Chmn. Vice-President of Committee of Council on Education [J.E. Gorst]; 6 members.

E.M. Sidgwick.

1897, xxxiii, C.8417; 1898, xxxii, C.8708.

**7. DC on the Maintenance and Education of Children in Poor Law Schools**

Chmn. A.J. Mundella; 7 members.

Mrs Henrietta O. Barnett.

1896, xliii, C.8027, C.8032-3.

**8. DC on Prisoners' Education**

Chmn. R.S. Milford; 3 members.

Hon. Mrs Lavinia Talbot.

1896, xliv, C.8154-5.

**9. DC on Reformatory and Industrial Schools**

Chmn. Sir G. Lushington; 8 members.

Miss Emma Cons; Miss Margaret Eve.

1896, xlv, C.8204; 1897, xlii, C.8290.

**1898****10. DC on Defective and Epileptic Children**

Chmn. Rev. T.W. Sharpe; 6 members.

Mrs Elizabeth M. Burgwin; Miss Pauline D. Townsend.

1898, xxvi, C.8746-7.

**11. DC on Pupil Teacher System**

Chmn. Rev. T.W. Sharpe; 11 members.

Miss Elizabeth P. Hughes; Miss Lydia Manley; Mrs Sarah J. Bannister.

1898, xxvi, C.8761-2.

**1899****12. DC on Inebriate Reformatories in Scotland**

Chmn. Lord Overtoun; 5 members.

F.C. Stevenson.

1899, xii, C.9175.

**1901**

**13. Committee of Inquiry into South African Concentration Camps**  
 Chmn. Mrs Millicent Fawcett; Miss Lucy Deane; Lady [Alice] Knox; Miss Katherine R. Brereton; Dr Ella Campbell Scarlett; Dr Jane E. Waterston.  
 1902, lxvii, Cd.893.

**1904**

**14. RC on Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded**  
 Chmn. [1] Marquess of Bath; [2] Earl of Radnor; 11 members.  
 Mrs Ellen F. Pinsent.  
 1908, xxxix, Cd.4202; xxxv, Cd.4215; xxxvi, Cd.4216; xxxvii, Cd.4217-8; xxxviii, Cd. 4219.

**15. IDC on Model Course of Physical Exercises**  
 Chmn. J. Struthers; 8 members.  
 Miss Edith M. Deverell.  
 1904, xix, Cd.2032.

**1905**

**16. IDC on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools**  
 Chmn. H.W. Simpkinson; 4 members.  
 Hon. Maude Lawrence.  
 1906, xlvii, Cd.2779, Cd.2784.

**17. RC on Poor Laws**

Chmn. Lord G. Hamilton; 19 members  
 Mrs Helen Bosanquet; Miss Octavia Hill; Mrs Beatrice Webb.  
 1909, xxxvii, Cd.4499; xxxviii, Cd.4630; xxxviii, Cd.4922. [Principal reports only.]

**1906**

**18. DC on Truck Acts**  
 Chmn. J. Shaw; 7 members.  
 Mrs M. Tennant.  
 1908, lix, Cd.4442-4; 1909, xlix, Cd.4568.

**1908**

**19. DC on Accidents in Factories**  
 Chmn. F.D. Acland; 8 members.  
 Miss Mona Wilson.  
 1911, xxiii, Cd.5535, 5540.

**20. Consultative Committee of the Department of Education on Devolution  
by County Education Authorities**

As previous entry except for one extra male.  
1908, lxxxii, Cd.3952.

**21. DC on Inebriates in Scotland**

Chmn. W. Bilsland; 8 members.  
Mrs Ada A. Falconer, Miss Elizabeth Grant.  
1909, xxvi, Cd.4766-7.

**22. DC on Lead in Potteries**

Chmn. E.F.G. Hatch; 9 members.  
Miss Gertrude M. Tuckwell.  
1910, xxix, Cd.5219, 5278, 5385.

**23. Consultative Committee of the Department of Education on School  
Attendance of Children below the age of Five**

Chmn. A.H.D. Acland; 20 members.  
Dr S. Bryant; Miss Isabel Cleghorn; L. Manley; E.M. Sidgwick.  
1908, lxxxii, Cd.4259.

**24. DC on Working of Midwives Act 1902**

Chmn. A.W. FitzRoy; 6 members.  
Mrs Georgina Hobhouse.  
1909, xxxiii, Cd.4822-23.

**1909**

**25. Consultative Committee of the Department of Education on Attendance  
at Continuation Schools**

As above entry; 6 additional members, including Miss Frances H. Durham;  
Miss Margaret J. Tuke.  
1909, xvii, Cd.4757-8.

**26. RC on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes**

Chmn. Lord Gorell; 13 members.  
Lady Frances Balfour; M. Tennant.  
1912-13, xviii, Cd.6478-9; xix, Cd.6480; xx, Cd.6481-2.

**27. DC on Employment of Children Act 1903**

Chmn. J.A. Simon; 10 members.  
Mrs Dorothy Gladstone.  
1910, xxviii, Cd.5229-30.

**28. DC on Additional Grants to Scottish Universities**

Chmn. Lord Elgin; 6 members.  
Miss Elizabeth S. Haldane.  
1910, xxvi, Cd.5257-8.

**29. RC on University Education in London**

Chmn. R.B. Haldane; 7 members.

Mrs Louise Creighton.

1910, xxiii, Cd.5166; 1911, xx, Cd.5528, 5911; 1912-13, xxii, Cd.6015, 6312; 1913, xl, Cd.6717-8.

**1910****30. DC on Prison Libraries**

Chmn. M.L. Waller; 5 members.

Miss Olive Birrell.

1911, xxxix, Cd.5589.

**1911****31. Committee on Conditions of Employment in the Linen and other making-up trades of the North of Ireland**

Chmn. E.F.G. Hatch; 2 members.

Mrs Lucy Deane Streatfeild.

1912-13, xxxiv, Cd.6509.

**32. DC on Educational Endowments**

Chmn. C. Trevelyan; 13 members.

E.P. Hughes.

1911, xvii, Cd.5662, Cd.5747.

**33. Consultative Committee of the Department of Education on Examinations in Secondary Schools**

Chmn. A.H.D. Acland; 19 members.

S. Bryant; I. Cleghorn; F.H. Durham; M.J. Tuke.

1911, xvi, Cd.6004.

**34. Vice-Regal Commission into Irish Milk Supply**

Chmn. P.J. O'Neill; 8 members.

Lady[Sylvia V.] Everard; Miss Margaret McNeill.

1913, xxix, Cd.6683-84, 6936-67; 1914, xxxvi, Cd.7129, 7134.

**35. IDC on Outdoor Staff**

Chmn. F. Mowatt; 8 members.

E.S. Haldane.

1912-13, xlii, Cd.6231.

**36. DC on Reformatory and Industrial Schools**

Chmn. E.J. Griffith; 11 members.

Mrs Clementine S. Churchill; Mrs H.D. Player; Lady [Mary C.] Talbot.

1913, xxxix, Cd.6838-9.

1912

**37. Committee on Application of National Insurance Act to Outworkers**

Chmn. E.F.G. Hatch; 4 members.

Miss Mary M. Paterson.

1912-13, xlii, Cd.6178-9.

**38. DC on Application of National Insurance Act to Outworkers in Ireland**

Chmn. E.F.G. Hatch; 3 members.

Mrs Marie L. Dickie; M.M. Paterson.

1914-16, xxxi, Cd.7685-6.

**39. DC on Buildings for Small Holdings in England and Wales**

Chmn. C. Turnor; 9 members.

Miss Constance Cochrane.

1913, xv, Cd.6708.

**40. RC on Civil Service**

Chmn. [1] Lord MacDonnell; [2] Sir H.B. Smith; 19 members.

E.S. Haldane; L.D. Streatfeild.

1912-13, xv, Cd.6210, 6535; 1913, xviii, Cd.6740; 1914, xvi, Cd.7338-40;

1914-16, xi, Cd.7748-9; 1914-16, xii, Cd.7832, 8130.

**41. IDC on Employment under the Crown**

Chmn. M. Nathan; 5 members.

M. Wilson.

1912-13, xlii, Cd.6234, 6315; 1914, lxii, Cd.7176.

**42. Committee on Highlands and Islands Medical Service**

Chmn. J.A. Dewar; 8 members.

Lady [Katharine] Tullibardine.

1912-13, xlii, Cd.6559; 1913, xxxvii, Cd.6920.

**43. RC on Housing of Industrial Population of Scotland**

Chmn. Sir H. Ballantyne, 11 members.

Mrs Helen L. Kerr.

1917-18, xiv, Cd.8731.

**44. DC on Tuberculosis**

Chmn. W. Astor; 19 members.

Miss Jane Walker.

1912-13, xlviii, Cd. 6164.

**1913**

- 45. Consultative Committee of the Department of Education on Practical Work in Secondary Schools**  
 Chmn. A.H.D. Acland; 20 members.  
 I. Cleghorn; Miss M.A. Douglas; F.H. Durham; Miss Hannah Robertson; M.J. Tuke.  
 1913, xx, Cd.6849.
- 46. DC on Sickness Benefit Claims**  
 Chmn. C. Schuster; 13 members.  
 Miss Mary H.F. Ivens; Miss Mary R. Macarthur; M. Wilson.  
 1914-16, xxx-xxxi, Cd.7687-91.
- 47. RC on Venereal Diseases**  
 Chmn. Lord Sydenham; 14 members.  
 Dr Mary Scharlieb; L. Creighton; E.M. Burgwin.  
 1914, xlix, Cd.7475; 1916, xvi, Cd.8189-90.

**1914**

- 48. Government Committee on Steps taken for the prevention and relief of distress due to the War**  
 Chmn. H. Samuel; 11 members.  
 M. Tennant.  
 1914, lxxi, Cd.7603.

The above committee appointed a number of sub-committees, those which included women are listed below.

- 49. LGB Intelligence Advisory Committee**  
 Chmn. B. Seebohm Rowntree; 7 members.  
 M.R. Macarthur.
- 50. LGB London Intelligence Committee**  
 Chmn. C. Jackson; 13 members.  
 Miss Bruce; Mrs Drake; Miss Gardner.
- 51. Cabinet Committee on Prevention and Relief of Distress**  
 Chmn. W.H. Long; 9 members.  
 M. Tennant.
- 52. LGB Committee on Prevention and Relief of Distress in London**  
 Chmn. J. Burns/C.F.G. Masterman; 9 members.  
 Miss Nettie Adler; B. Webb.

**53. LGB Committee on Professional Classes**

Chmn. J. Herbert Lewis; 4 members.

Lady [Margaret] Crewe; Miss M.G. Spencer.

**54. Central Committee on Women's Employment**

Chmn. Lady Crewe; M. Tennant; Lady [Ellen] Askwith; Miss Margaret G. Bondfield; Mrs [Ivy M.] Chamberlain; Mrs M.A. Gasson, Miss Reina E. Lawrence; Miss A.Susan Lawrence; Miss V.R. Markham; Lady [Madeleine] Midleton; Dr Marion Phillips; the Hon. Mrs [Edith] Lyttelton; M.R. Macarthur; the Hon. Lily Montagu.

1914-16, xxxvii, Cd.7848.

There were similar committees for women's employment in Scotland and Ireland - one in Belfast and one in Dublin.

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**55. DC on Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Scotland**

Chmn. A.A. Allen; 9 members.

Miss Agnes Husband; Mrs Helen L. Mackenzie.

1914-16, xxxiv, Cd.7886-7.

**56. Committee on Grants to Universities and Colleges in Wales**

Chmn. W.S. McCormick; 6 members.

Miss Emily Penrose.

1916, viii, (62).

**57. Consultative Committee of the Department of Education on Scholarships for Higher Education**

Chmn. A.H.D. Acland; 15 members.

I. Cleghorn; M.A. Douglas; H. Robertson.

1916, viii, Cd.8291.

**58. Committee of the National Relief Fund**

Chmn. Sir G. Murray; 15 members.

Countess of Kerry; M. Macarthur; Mrs P. McKenna; V. Markham.

Nine reports. Final Report, 1919, xxvi, Cmd. 356.

\*\*\*\*\*

War-time commissions and committees are listed in four parliamentary returns; three of which list those committees set up to deal with war-time problems: 1914-16, Cd.7855, lv, 1916, Cd.8256, xxiii and 1917-18, Cd.8741, xxviii; the fourth lists committees dealing with post-war problems: 1917-18, Cd.4916, xxxviii.

Only the name of the committee and its secretary are given in the returns, thus the presence or number of women members cannot be checked. The following committees are listed in the returns, but details of their membership were found in papers prepared by various Departments for their submissions to the Machinery of Government committee. The date

and volume number given at the end of each entry is that of the return in which it is listed. No reports have been traced.

**59. Board of Trade Committee on Extension of Women's Industrial Employment**

Chmn. C. Harmsworth; 12 members.

Miss Adelaide Anderson; Miss Hilda Cashmore; F. Durham; V. Markham.  
1914-16, Iv, Cd.7855.

**60. Central Munitions Labour Supply Committee**

Chmn. A. Henderson; 11 members.

M. Macarthur.

1916, xxiii, Cd.8256.

**61. National Register Committee**

Chmn. Lord Lansdowne; 13 members.

V.R. Markham.

1916, xxiii, Cd.8256.

**62. Committee on Soldiers' Dependents' Appeals Assessment**

Chmn. W.H. Dickinson; 3 members.

L.D. Streatfeild.

1916, xxiii, Cd.8256.

**63. War Savings Committee**

Chmn. G.N. Barnes; 7 members.

M. Wilson.

1916, xxiii, Cd.8256.

**64. Home Office Committee on Summer Time**

Chmn. J.W. Wilson; 9 members.

Mrs Herbert Samuel; Miss Theodora M. Morton.

1917-18, xxxviii, Cd.8741.

**65. Committee on Juvenile Organisations**

Chmn. C.E.B. Russell/ Dr A.H. Norris; 19 members.

Lady[O] Baden-Powell; Lady F. Balfour; Mrs Ogilvie Gordon; Hon. Lily Montagu; Miss A.E. Towers.

1917-18, xxxviii, Cd.8741.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 1915

**66. Women's Committee of the Central Control Board**

Chmn. L. Creighton. Lady F. Balfour; Miss Eliza J. Aikman; Mrs Eleanor Barton; Mrs Margaret Bretherton; Mrs. Florence F. Booth; Dr Janet M. Campbell; Mrs M. Glyn Jones; Miss Hilda M. Kelly; Miss Elizabeth Macadam; Miss M. Cecile Matheson; Mrs Kate L. Somerton.  
Report included in the second report of the Central Control Board: 1916, xii, Cd.8243.

**67. Committee on Clerical and Commercial Employment**

Chmn. C. Harmsworth; 11 members.  
V. Markham; M.M. Paterson.  
1914-16, xiii, Cd.8110.

**68. Committee on Health of Munition Workers**

Chmn. Sir G. Newman; 10 members.  
Miss Rose E. Squire; M. Tennant.  
1917-18, xvi, Cd. 8511.

**69. Committee on Shops**

Chmn. C. Harmsworth; 9 members.  
M. Bondfield; R.E. Squire.  
1914-16, xxv, Cd.8113.

**70. Office of Works Committee on Treatment of British Prisoners of War**

Chmn. Justice Younger; 9 members.  
Mrs Una Pope-Hennessy, Mrs A.L. Livingstone, Adeline, Duchess of Bedford. Secretary: Mrs A.L. Livingstone.  
1916, xv, Cd.8224.

**71. Committee on War Organisation in Distributing Trades in Scotland**

Chmn. J.D. White; 12 members.  
Miss J. Alice Younger.  
1914-16, xxxvii, Cd.7987; 1916, iv, Cd.8222.

## 1916

**72. DC on Approved Society Finance and Administration**

Chmn. G.H. Ryan; 19 members.  
M. Macarthur; Miss Muriel Ritson.  
1916, xiv, Cd.8251, 8396; 1917-18, xvii, Cd.8451.

**73. DC on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War**

Chmn. J.H. Lewis; 15 members.  
Miss Clara Martineau; Lady Mary Talbot.  
1916, viii, Cd.8374; 1917-18, xi, Cd.8512, 8577.

**74. Committee on the Position of Modern Languages in the Educational System of Great Britain**

Chmn. S. Leathes; 13 members.

Miss Margaret A. Gilliland; M.J. Tuke.

1918, ix, Cd.9036.

**75. Committee on the Position of Natural Science in the Educational System of Great Britain**

Chmn. Sir J.J. Thomson; 15 members.

Miss Ethel R. Gwatkin.

1918, ix, Cd.9011.

**76. DC on Prices**

Chmn. J.M. Robertson; 8 members [originally 11].

M.S. Pember Reeves.

1916, xiv, Cd.8358; 1912-18, xviii, Cd.8483.

**77. Statutory Committee of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation to administer Naval & Military War Pensions Act, 1915**

Chmn. Prince of Wales; Vice-Chmn. Cyril Jackson; 10 members.

F.H. Durham; B. Webb.

1917-18, xvii, Cd.8750.

The committee had a number of sub-committees and local committees on which women served; their names are included in the report.

**78. RC on University Education in Wales**

Chmn. R.B. Haldane; 8 members.

Miss Emily Penrose.

1917-18, xii, Cd.8500, 8507, 8698-9; 1918, xiv, Cd.8991, 8993.

**79. Committee on War Charities**

Chmn. J.W. Wilson; 7 members.

Lady[Gertrude]Emmott.

1916, vi, Cmd.8287.

**80. Committee on Women's Employment [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. 1) Sir J. Simon; 2) Major J.W. Hills; 22 members.

A.M. Anderson; Miss Clara E. Collet; Miss Ada M. Crabbie; Miss B.M. Cunningham; F.H. Durham; A.S. Lawrence; Miss M.M. McQueen; Miss Elizabeth B. Mitchell; M.M. Paterson; G.M. Tuckwell; Mrs Louisa Wilkins; M. Wilson.

Sub-committees

Agriculture: inc. Durham, Paterson, Lady Mary E. Talbot [replaced by McQueen], Crabbie, Wilkins.

Clerical & Commercial work: inc. Collet, Lawrence, Miss Mary Longman.

Industrial work: inc. Anderson, Collet, Cunningham, Durham, Lawrence, Longman, Paterson, Wilson.

Procedure: inc. Lawrence, Wilson.

1918, Cd.9239, xiv.

**81. Committee on Women's Service**

Chmn. Sir G. Newman; 8 members.

Lady Margaret Ampthill; Miss Lilian M. Clapham; Mrs Katherine Furse; V.R. Markham; Lady Victoria Primrose; M. Tennant.

Confidential report signed 14 Dec 1916.

**1917****82. Committee on Adult Education [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. A.L. Smith; 18 members.

Mrs H. Jennie Baker; Mrs Alice Davies.

1918, ix, Cd.9107, Cd.9225, 9237; 1919, xxviii, Cmd.321.

There were various sub-committees, including an all-women one on women's education, chaired by Mrs Baker, with six other members.

**83. Committee on Civilian War Workers [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. G. Bellhouse; 17 members.

Mrs M.J. Bell-Richards\*; A.S. Lawrence; M. Phillips.

1918, xiv, Cd.9117, Cd.9192, 9228.

\*Resigned 15 April 1918 and did not sign reports.

**84. Advisory Panel on Housing in England and Wales [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Lord Salisbury; 5 members.

B. Webb.

1918, xxvi, Cd.9087.

**85. Committee on Local Govt [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Sir D. Maclean; 13 members.

B. Webb.

1917-18, xviii, Cd.8917.

**86. Committee on Local Reconstruction Organisations [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. A.C. Sandbach; 11 members.

Ida Gandy.

1919, xxix, Cmd.136.

**87. Committee on the Machinery of Government [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Lord Haldane; 6 members.

B. Webb.

1918, xii, Cd.9230.

**88. Committee on Relations between Employers and Employed [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. J.H. Whitley; 12 members.

A.S. Lawrence; M. Wilson.

1917-18, xviii, Cd.8606; 1918, x, Cd.9002; 1918, xiv, Cd.9001.

**89. Committee on Remuneration of Teachers in Scotland**

Chmn: Sir H. Craik; 16 members.

Miss K.V. Bannatyne; Miss Eleanor Kerr; Miss Annabella Sutherland.

1917, NPP, Scottish Education Department.

**90. DC on Salary Scales for Teachers in Elementary Schools**

Chmn. Sir H.L. Stephen; 15 members.

Miss M.M. Allan; I. Cleghorn; Miss Isabel A. Dickson; Miss Hermione Unwin.

1917-18, xi, Cd.8939; 1918, ix, Cd.8999.

**91. DC on Tinkers in Scotland**

Chmn. R.M.Fergusson; 5 members.

Duchess of Atholl; Miss Agnes Campbell.

1918, NPP, Scottish Office.

**\* Committee on Wages Awards [Reconstruction]**

Chmn: Sir John Simon; 12 members.

M. Macarthur.

Report not published, but completed in 1918. See *PP* 1918, xiii, Cd.9231, p.21.

\*Omitted from the numbered sequence.

**1918****92. Vice-Regal Committee on Conditions of Service and Renumeration of Teachers in Intermediate Schools in Ireland**

Chmn. T.F. Molony; 17 members.

Miss Annie McHugh; Miss Mary Ryan; Miss Elizabeth Steele; Miss Henrietta Margaret White.

1919, xxi, Cmd.66.

**93. Sub-Committee on Co-ordination of the Vocational Training of Women  
[Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Miss A.S. Lawrence; 5 members.

Miss A.E. Esplin; Miss Helen Smith; Miss M.G. Spencer.

1918, NPP, Ministry of Reconstruction.

**94. Committee on Cost of Living of Working Classes**

Chmn. Lord Sumner; 7 members.

Mrs Lilian C.A. Knowles; M.S. Pember Reeves.

1918, vii, Cd.8980.

**95. Travelling Commission of the Ministry of Food: Enquiry into Cost of  
Production of Milk**

Chmn. C.B. Fisher; 11 members.

Mrs. Mary E. Cottrell.

1919, xxv, Cmd. 205.

**Women's Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction**

Chmn. Lady Emmott; Lady [Mabel C.] Birchenough; Miss Lilian Harris; A.S. Lawrence; Marion Phillips; M.S. Pember Reeves; Lady [Margaret] Rhondda, L.D. Streatfeild; Miss Madeleine Symons; M.J. Tuke.\*

**96. Sub-committees on Domestic Service Problem**

**A - Training**

Chmn. Dr Janet E. Lane Claypon; Mrs Margaret Arran; Mrs Mary Bamber; B.M. Cunningham; Mrs Eveline M. Lowe; Miss Mary E. Marsden; Miss Winifred L. Mercier; Mrs Dorothy C. Parkes; Miss Dymphna Smith; Miss Elsie M. Zimmern.

**B- Machinery of Distribution of Domestic Servants**

Chmn. Lady [F. Jean] Trustram Eve; 9 members.

Mrs M. Bramley; Mrs Jennie E. Cockerton; Mrs C.A. Locke; Miss Emma E.J. Splatt; Miss Jessie Stephen; Miss Fanny I. Taylor.

**C - Home Helps**

Chmn. Mrs Reeves; Mrs H.J. Baker; Mrs Dideridge; Miss A.H. Enfield; Miss L. Harris; Dr Shadwick Higgins; Miss Kerans; Mrs L. Mawer; Mrs L. Model.

**D - Organisation and Supply**

Chmn. Lady Emmott, Mrs Marion Atkin; Mrs F.N.H. Bell; Miss Clementina Black; Dame Katherine Furse; Miss Glynn, Miss Wilhelmina L. Brodie Hall, Mrs Alice Jarrett; Dame Florence Leach; Marchioness of Londonderry; Mrs R. Vaughan Nash; Miss Mabel V. Partner; Mrs Dorothy C. Peel; Miss Mary E. Phillips; J. Stephen; M.J. Tuke; Miss Rosalind Whyatt.

1919, xxix, Cmd.67.

\*This committee has not been numbered in the appendix, as it reported through its sub-committees. See also p.389.

**97. Women's Sub-Committee on Housing [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Lady Emmott; E. Barton; Mrs Sybella Branford; Miss Annette Churton; Mrs Averil D. Sanderson Furniss; Mrs Gerda S. Guy; Mrs Alice Jarrett; Mrs C. Ethel Lloyd; Miss Maud M. Jeffery; Miss Mary D. Jones; Mrs Rosalind Moore; Mrs D.C. Peel; Mrs Annie Foulkes-Smith.

1918, x, Cd.9166, 9232.

**98. Women's Committee on House Planning in Scotland**

Chmn. H.L. Kerr; Miss C.M. Barbour; Mrs C. Blair; Mrs Ferguson; Mrs Mary Burns Laird; Nurse J.P. Watt; Mrs Annie C.L. Wilson.

1918, NPP, Scottish Board of Health.

**99. Committee on National War Savings**

Chmn. R.M. Kindersley; 16 members.

Miss Beatrice Chamberlain; M.S. Pember Reeves.

1918, xiv, Cd.9112.

**100. Vice-Regal Committee on Primary Education in Ireland**

Chmn. Lord Killanin; 16 members.

Miss Margaret Doyle.

1919, xxi, Cmd.60, 178.

**101. DC on Salaries for Teachers in Secondary Schools and Higher Education Colleges (excluding Universities)**

Chmn. Sir R.L. Stephen; 20 members.

Miss M.M. Allan; Miss C.R. Ash; Miss S.L. Beszant; Miss A.T. Steele; Miss Katharine T. Wallas.

1918, ix, Cd.9140; 1919, xxi, Cmd.443.

**102. Committee on Subsidiary Health and Kindred Services [Recon]**

Chmn. Lady Rhondda; 13 members.

Dr Helen Campbell; Miss Letitia S. Clark; Dr J.L. Claypon; Miss Enfield; Miss Christiana S. Gregory; L. Harris; Mrs Hood; Mrs C.A. Layton; E. Macadam; Dr Mary Eppyn Phillips; E. Pinsent; Miss M.J. Rimmer.

There were three sub-committees:

**Nurses**

M.E. Phillips; H. Campbell; L.S. Clark; M.J. Rimmer; C.S. Gregory.

**Maternity and Infancy Workers**

H. Campbell; C.S. Gregory; C.A. Layton; M.S. Pember Reeves.

[Amalgamated with the Women's Advisory Committee on Home Helps.]

**Welfare Workers**

J. Lane Claypon; E. Macadam; Miss Kelly; Miss Thomas; Miss Hadow.

**103. Sub-Committee of Women's Advisory Committee on Women Holding Temporary Appointments in Government Departments [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Mrs L.D. Streatfeild; 7 members.  
Miss Philippa Fawcett, Mrs Rosalind Nash; Miss Lucy F. Nettlefold; Miss Reta Oldham; M.J. Tuke.  
1919, xxix, Cmd. 199.

**104.** War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry  
Chmn. Lord Atkin; 5 members.  
J.M. Campbell; B. Webb.  
1919, xxxi, Cmd.135, Cmd.167.

## 1919

**105.** Committee to advise on the appointment of Women JPs  
Chmn. Lady Crewe; Lady Londonderry; Lady Salisbury; E.S. Haldane; G.M. Tuckwell; Mrs Mary Ward [replaced by V. Markham]; B. Webb.  
Report not published.

**106.** Committee on Classics in Education  
Chmn. Lord Crewe; 18 members.  
Miss Madeleine D. Brock; Miss Katharine Jex-Blake.  
1923, NPP Bd of Education.

**107.** Committee on Employment of Women in Agriculture in England and Wales  
Chmn. Mrs L. Wilkins; 7 members.  
Lady [Gwendolen] Elveden; Miss M.M. McQueen.  
1919, NPP, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**108.** RC on Income Tax  
Chmn. Lord Colwyn; 24 members.  
L. Knowles.  
1920, xviii, Cmd.615.

**109.** DC on Old Age Pensions  
Chmn. Sir W.R.D. Adkins; 17 members.  
H.J. Baker; M.C. Matheson.  
1919, xxvii, Cmd.410.

**110.** Oversea Settlement Committee: Openings in Canada for Women from the United Kingdom  
F.M. Girdler; Miss Gladys S. Pott.  
1919, xxxi, Cmd.403.

**111.** RC on Oxford and Cambridge  
Chmn. H.H. Asquith; 22 members.  
E. Penrose; Miss Blanche A. Clough.  
1922, x, Cmd. 1588.

**112. Committee on Reorganisation of Factory Inspectorate**

Chmn. Sir Malcolm Delevingne; 3 members.

V. Markham.

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**113. DC on Scholarships**

Chmn. E. Hilton Young; 14 members.

Miss Essie R. Conway; Miss Philippa Fawcett; Miss Beatrice M. Sparks.

1920, xv, Cmd.968.

**114. DC on Teaching of English in England**

Chmn. H. Newbolt; 13 members.

Miss Karolina M. Baines; Miss H.M. Davies; Miss D. Enright; Miss Lucy A.

Lowe; Prof. Caroline Spurgeon; Miss G. Perrie Williams.

1921, NPP, Board of Education.

**115. Committee on Theatrical Children Licences**

Chmn. E.H. Oates; 9 members.

Miss Italia Conti; Mrs Dorothea Irving.

1919, xxx, Cmd.484.

**116. DC on Welsh Secondary Education**

Chmn. W.N. Bruce; 9 members.

Miss Lillian M. Faithfull; E.P. Hughes.

1920, xv, Cmd.967.

**117. Committee on Women in Agriculture in Scotland**

Chmn. Mrs A. Douglas; 11 members.

A. Campbell; A.M. Crabbie; Miss B. Jobson; Mrs J. Notman; M.M. Paterson;

Mrs Margaret M. Stirling; A. Younger.

1920, NPP Board of Agriculture for Scotland.

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After the creation of the Ministry of Health in 1919, a number of consultative councils were established, similar to that . . . for the Department of Education. There was one for each of the four countries of the United Kingdom, and each issued a report on that country's future medical and health service needs. Only details of their initial reports have been included here. They were all appointed in 1920.

**118. Consultative Council on Medical and Allied Services: future provision of medical and allied services**

Chmn. Lord Dawson; 19 members

M.H. F. Ivens; J.E. Lane-Claypon.

1920, xvii, Cmd.693.



**119.** Irish Public Health Council: Public health and medical services in Ireland

Chmn. E.C. Bigger; 16 members.

Miss Alice Barry; M.L. Dickie; Countess of Kenmare; Mrs Julia McMordie.  
1920, xvii, Cmd.761.

**120.** Consultative Committee on Medical and Allied Services in Scotland

Chmn. Sir D. MacAlister; 19 members.

Miss Annie W. Gill; Miss Laura Stewart-Sandeman.  
1920, xvii, Cmd.1039.

**121.** Consultative Council for Health in Scotland

Chmn. Sir T. Munro; 18 members.

Lady Aberdeen; Mrs M.B. Laird; Lady Mackenzie.

**122.** Consultative Committee on Medical and Allied Services in Wales

Chmn. Sir E.R. Jones; 30 members.

Mrs E. Andrews; Mrs Breese; Miss Lena Crowther; Miss A.M. Davies; Mrs F.R. Davies; Lady [Ada] Mather-Jackson.  
1920, xvii, Cmd.703.

**123.** Consultative Council on the Highlands and Islands

Chmn. Duchess of Atholl; 13 members.

Lady Gilmour; Miss B. Jobson; H.L. Kerr; Miss S.M. Macphail; Miss M.M. White.

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## 1920

**124.** DC on Causes and Prevention of Blindness

Chmn. G.H. Roberts; 13 members.

Mrs Jessie W. Phipps.

1922, NPP, Ministry of Health.

**125.** Committee on Child Adoption

Chmn. Sir A. Hopkinson; 5 members.

Lady [Priscilla] Norman; Mrs Lilian M. Russell.

1921, ix, Cmd 1254.

**126.** Joint Select Committee on Criminal Law Amendment Bills and Sexual Offences Bill

Chmn. Lord Muir-Mackenzie; 10 members.

Lady [Nancy] Astor.

1920, vi, (222).

**127.** Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on the Differentiation of the Curricula between the Sexes in Secondary Schools.

Chmn. W.H. Hadow ; 20 members.

E.R. Conway; Miss Freda Hawtrey; Dr Bertha Phillpotts; Miss Emmeline M. Tanner.

1923, NPP, Bd of Education.

**128.** Committee on Employment of Women on Police Duties

Chamn. J.L. Baird; 7 members.

Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan; Lady Astor.

1920, xxii, Cmd.877; 1921, xvi, Cmd.113.

**129.** DC on Employment of Women and Young Persons on the Two-Shift System

Chmn. T.W.H. Inskip; 6 members.

Mrs Dorothea Colman; F.H. Durham; Miss Julia Varley.

1920, xix, Cmd.1037-8.

**130.** Committee on Living-in on Canal Boats

Chmn. N. Chamberlain; 6 members.

E. Barton; Dame Louise G. Samuel.

1921, NPP Ministry of Health.

**131.** Oversea Settlement Committee: Openings in Australia for Women from the United Kingdom

Miss Dorothea Pughe Jones; Mrs Lisbeth Simm.

1920, xxii, Cmd.745.

**132.** Committee on Principles for dealing with Unhealthy Areas

Chmn. N. Chamberlain; 7 members.

E. Barton.

1920, NPP, Ministry of Health.

**133.** Committees on Profiteering

Biscuit Trade

Chmn. W. Beveridge; 12 members.

M. Phillips.

1920, xxiii, Cmd.856.

Clogs

Chmn. J.W. Verdier; 5 members.

M. Phillips.

1920, xxiii, Cmd.541.

Costings in Government Departments

Chmn. C.A. McCurdy; 11 members.

M. Phillips.

1920, xxiii, Cmd.1047.

**Furniture**

Chmn. J. Perring; 6 members.  
Mrs Lavinia Salman.  
1920, xxiii, Cmd.983.

**Laundry Prices**

Chmn. J.J. Mallon; 7 members. M.E. Cottrell; K. Manicom; Mrs Annie E. Reeves.  
1920, xxiii, Cmd.903.

**Metal Bedsteads**

Chmn. C.A. McCurdy; 12 members.  
M. Phillips.  
1920, xxiii, Cmd.607.

**Worsted Yarns**

Chmn. C.A. McCurdy; 9 members.  
M. Phillips.  
1920, xxiii, Cmd.550.

**134. DC on Smoke Abatement**

Chmn. Lord Newton; 9 members.  
Dame L.G. Samuel.  
1920, xxv, Cmd. 755.

**135. DC on Training and Appointment and Payment of Probation Officers**

Chmn. Sir J. Baird; 4 members.  
Miss Amy A. Ivimy.  
1922, x, Cmd. 1601.

**136. DC on Wholesale Food Markets in London**

Chmn. C.A. McCurdy, 17 members.  
K. Manicom.  
1920, xvii, Cmd.634, Cmd.713.

**137. Committee on Work of Employment Exchanges**

Chmn. G.N. Barnes; 11 members.  
Mrs Ruth Lewis; J. Varley.  
1920, xix, Cmd.1054; 1921, xi, Cmd.1140.

**1921****138. Sub-Committee of the Housing Advisory Committee on Co-operative and Communal Arrangements [Reconstruction]**

Chmn. Lady Emmott; 4 members.  
H.O. Barnett; D.C. Peel.  
1921, NPP, Ministry of Health.

**139.** DC on Lighting in Factories [Originally set up in 1913 when it had no women members]

Chmn. W.C.D. Whetham; 8 members.

R.E. Squire.

1921, xii, Cmd.1418.

**140.** DC on Machinery and Administration of the Ministry of Pensions

Chmn. G.C. Tryon; 18 members.

Miss E.H. Kelly.

1921, NPP, Ministry of Pensions.

**141.** DC on Medical Examination of Young People for Factory Employment

Chmn. J.R. Davies; 7 members.

Mrs Clara D. Rackham.

1924, ix, Cmd.2135.

**142.** Committees on Profiteering

Brushes and Brooms

Chmn. S.D. Begbie; 7 members.

Miss Mabel Crout.

1921, xvi, Cmd.1275.

Dyeing and Cleaning

Chmn. S.D. Begbie; 7 members.

L. Salman.

1921, xvi, Cmd.1361.

Gas Apparatus

Chmn. G.W. Bailey; 4 members.

M. Phillips.

1921, xvi, Cmd.1381.

Pottery

Chmn. W.M. Freeman; 11 members.

M.E. Cottrell; Miss Joyce Powell.

1921, xvi, Cmd.1360.

Shoe Repairs

Chmn. W.M. Freeman; 8 members.

A.E. Reeves.

1921, xvi, Cmd.1345.

**143.** Committee on Trade Board Acts

Chmn. Lord Cave; 9 members.

A. Anderson; E. Lyttelton.

1922, x, Cmd.1645.

**1922****144. DC on Distribution and Prices of Agricultural Produce**

Chmn. Lord Linlithgow; 8 members.

Mrs Margaret Wintringham.

Final report: 1924, vii, Cmd.2008.

**145. Committee on Nursing in Mental Hospitals**

Chmn. Sir C.H. Bond; 8 members.

Mrs Edith How-Martyn; E.F. Pinsent; L.G. Samuel; Miss M.M. Thorburn.

1924, NPP, Board of Control.

**146. IDC on Sale of Milk in Scotland**

Chmn. Sir L. Mackenzie; 14 members.

Lady [Violet] Mar and Kellie; M. Ritson.

1922, ii, Cmd.1749, Sess. II.

**147. Committee on Scheme to establish scholarships and maintenance grants for sons and daughters of agricultural workmen and others**

Chmn. Sir T.H. Middleton; 12 members.

Lady [Gertrude M.] Denman. [Appointed in place of Dame Meriel Talbot.]

1927, NPP, Ministry of Agriculture.

**148. DC on Superannuation of School Teachers**

Chmn. Lord Emmott; 11 members.

Miss Sara M. Fry; M.J. Tuke.

1923, x, Cmd.1962.

**1923****149. Committee on Lace, Embroidery and Silk Industries**

Chmn. G.N.Barnes; 3 members.

Dame H. Gwynne-Vaughan.

1924-25, xv, Cmd.2403.

**150. Select Committee on Nationality of Married Women**

Chmn: Lord Chelmsford; 9 members.

M. Wintringham.

1923, vii, (115).

**151. Committee on Poor Persons' Rules**

Chmn. Lord Lawrence; 9 members.

E. Snowden.

1924-25, xv, Cmd.2358.

**152. Committee on Supply of Female Domestic Servants**

Chmn. Mrs Ethel M. Wood; 11 members.

F.N.H. Bell; E.M. Burgwin; Mrs Leonora Cohen; Miss Flora E. Fardell; Mrs Jane E. Hannay; Mrs Margaret A. Hurst; Mrs Rosalind Moore; Lady Helen Matilda Procter; Mrs Anne Strachey; J. Varley; M. Wintringham.

1923, NPP, Ministry of Labour.

**153. DC on Teacher Training in Elementary Schools**

Chmn. Lord Burnham; 17 members.

E.R. Conway; Miss Grace Fanner; F. Hawtrey; Dame Margaret Lloyd George; Miss Anna E. Wark; Prof. Helen M. Wodehouse.

1924-25, xii, Cmd.2409.

**154. Committee on Venereal Diseases**

Chmn. Lord Trevethin; 17 members.

Miss Dorothy C. Hare; Miss Morna L. Rawlins.

1923, NPP, Ministry of Health.

**1924****155. DC on Agricultural Education and Research in Scotland**

Chmn. Lord Constable; 8 members.

E.S. Haldane.

1924, NPP, Secretary of State for Scotland.

**156. Committee of British Overseas Settlement Delegation to Canada**

Chmn. Miss M. Bondfield; F.N.H. Bell, Mr G.F. Plant.

1924-25, xv, Cmd.2285.

**157. Committee on Child Adoption**

Chmn. T.J.C. Tomlin; 6 members.

Miss Dorothy Jewson; Hon. Mrs Eleanor B. Wilson-Fox.

1924-5, ix, Cmd.2401, 2469; 1926, viii, Cmd.2711.

**158. DC on Employment of Policewomen**

Chmn. W.C. Bridgeman; 5 members.

Dame H. Gwynne-Vaughan; E. Barton.

1924, xii, Cmd.2224.

**159. RC on Food Prices**

Chmn. Sir A.C. Geddes; 15 members.

Dame H. Gwynne-Vaughan; Mrs Ethel Snowden.

1924-25, xiii, Cmd.2390.

**160. Committee on Hospital Services of Scotland**

Chmn. Lord Mackenzie; 12 members.

Mrs Elizabeth Shirley.

1926, NPP, Scottish Board of Health.

**161. Committee on Industry and Trade**

Chmn. A.J. Balfour; 16 members.

Mrs Mary A. Hamilton.

Final report, 1928-29, vii, Cmd.3282.

**162. RC on Lunacy and Mental Disorder**

Chmn. H.P. Macmillan; 11 members.

Mrs Anna Mathew; Miss Madeleine Symons.

1926, xiii, Cmd. 2700.

**163. Joint Committee on Mental Deficiency**

Chmn. A.H. Wood; 9 members.

Miss Evelyn E.M. Fox; E.F. Pinsent; Miss Hilda Redfern.

1929, NPP, Board of Education and Board of Control.

**164. Committee on National Debt and Taxation**

Chmn. Lord Colwyn; 11 members.

Mrs Barbara Wootton.

1927, xi, Cmd.2800.

**165. RC on National Health Insurance**

Chmn. Lord Lawrence; 13 members.

F.N.H. Bell; G.M. Tuckwell.

1926, xiv, Cmd.2596.

**166. Treasury Committee on Parliamentary Candidature of Crown Servants**

Chmn. Lord Blanesburgh; 5 members.

Miss A. Helen Ward.

1924-25, ix, Cmd.2408.

**167. DC on Public Libraries in England and Wales**

Chmn. Sir F.G. Kenyon; 10 members.

Lady[Mabel] Smith.

1927, xii, Cmd. 2868.

**168. Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on Psychological Tests of Educable Capacity**

Chmn. Sir W.H. Hadow; 20 members.

E.R. Conway; F. Hawtrey; Dr B. Phillpotts; E.M. Tanner.

1924, NPP, Bd of Education.

**169. Safeguarding of Industries Committees**

Brooms

Chmn. W.J.U. Woolcock; 2 members.

Lady[F.J.] Trustram Eve.

1924-25, xv, Cmd.2549.

## Cutlery

Chmn. Sir J.L. Devonshire; 2 members.  
M.C. Matheson.  
1924-25, xv, Cmd.2540.

## Gloves

Chmn. Sir C.J. Stewart; 2 members.  
Lady[E.] Askwith.  
1924-25, xv, Cmd.2531.

## Lace and Embroidery

Chmn. G.N. Barnes; 2 members.  
Dame H. Gwynne-Vaughan.  
1924-25, xv, Cmd.2403.

**170. DC on Sexual Offences against Young Persons**

Chmn. J.C. Priestley; 7 members.  
Miss Elisabeth H. Kelly; C. Martineau; C.D. Rackham.  
1924-25, xv, Cmd.2561.

**171. DC on Sexual Offences against Young Persons in Scotland**

Chmn. J.A. Fleming; 5 members.  
Mrs Madeline Archibald; Mrs A.C. Duncan; Mrs Dorothea Fyfe.  
1926, xv, Cmd.2592.

**172. Committee on Social Hygiene**

Chmn. Hon. W. Ormsby-Gore; 12 members.  
Lady Astor; Mrs Sybil Neville-Rolfe.  
1824-25, xv, Cmd.2501.

**173. DC on University of London**

Chmn. E. Hilton Young; 7 members.  
K.T. Wallas.  
1926, x, Cmd. 2612.

**1925****174. IDC on Agricultural Unemployment Insurance**

Chmn. Sir R.H. Rew; 10 members.  
L.D. Streatfeild.  
1926, NPP, Ministry of Agriculture and the Scottish Office.

**175. Committee on Broadcasting**

Chmn. Lord Crawford & Balcarres; 7 members.  
Dame Meriel Talbot.  
1926, viii, Cmd.2599.



**176. Committee of the China Indemnity Fund**

Chmn. Earl Buxton; 10 members.

A. Anderson.

1926, viii, Cmd.2766.

**177. Committee on Disinterested Management of Public Houses**

Chmn. Lord Southborough; 10 members.

M. Symons.

1927, x, Cmd.2862.

**178. DC on Export of Horses to the Continent**

Chmn. J.W. Hills; 7 members.

Lady[G.] Emmott.

1924-25, xii, Cmd.2495.

**179. Select Committee on General Nursing Council**

Chmn. Fisher; 10 members.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson.

1924-25, vii, (167).

**180. Committee on Legal Aid for Poor**

Chmn. W. Finlay; 11 members.

D. Jewson.

1926, xiii, Cmd.2638.

**181. IDC on Migration and Social Insurance**

Chmn. Sir D. Maclean; 6 members.

Miss Alice C. Franklin.

1926, x, Cmd.2608.

**182. Sub-Committee of IDC of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Board of Education on Practical Education of Women for Rural Life**

Chmn. Lady[G.] Denman; 8 members.

Miss Kate Manley; Miss S.Emily Matthews; Miss E.H. Pratt; A.E. Wark; M. Wintringham.

1928, NPP, Ministry of Agriculture.

**183. DC on Protection and Training**

Chmn. G. Morton; 8 members.

Miss Margaret H. Irwin; Mrs Ella Morison Millar.

1928, NPP, Secretary of State for Scotland.

**184. DC on Supervision of Charities**

Chmn. Sir H. Cunliffe; 17 members.

N. Adler; D. Jewson; Mrs Mabel R.H. Philipson.

1927, vii, Cmd.2823.

**185. DC on Treatment of Young Offenders**

Chmn. Sir T.F. Molony; 12 members.

Mrs Geraldine Cadbury; Lady [Isabel] Lawrence; Lady [Katharine] Lyttelton.  
1927, xii, Cmd.2831.

**186. DC on Unemployment Insurance**

Chmn. Lord Blanesburgh; 12 members.

M. Bondfield; Lady [Violet] Milner.  
1927, NPP, Ministry of Labour.

**187. DC on Welsh in Education and Life**

Chmn. W.N. Bruce; 12 members.

Miss Ellen Evans.

1927, NPP, Board of Education.

**1926****188. Consultative Committee of Board of Education on Education of the Adolescent**

Chmn. Sir W.H. Hadow; 19 members.

E.R. Conway; Miss Lynda Grier; F. Hawtrey; E.M. Tanner.

1927, NPP, Board of Education.

**189. Committee on Education and Industry (England and Wales)**

Chmn. D.O. Malcolm; 6 members.

Miss Mary Pickford.

1926; 1928, NPP, Board of Education.

**190. Select Committee on Registration of Nursing Homes**

Chmn. Sir C. Cobb; 10 members.

M.R.H. Philipson; E. Wilkinson.

1926, vii, (103).

**191. Safeguarding of Industries Committees****Hosiery**

Chmn. Sir J. Calder; 2 members.

Hon. Mrs Julia R. Maguire.

1926, xv, Cmd.2726.

**Worsted**

Chmn. Sir A. Whinney; 2 members.

Dame H. Gwynne-Vaughan.

1926, xv, Cmd.2635.

**1927****192. Committee on Education and Industry (Scotland)**

Chmn. Lord Salvesen; 6 members.

Mrs Anne I. Douglas.

1927; 1928, NPP, Secretary of State for Scotland.

**193. RC on London Squares**

Chmn. Lord Londonderry; 13 members.

Dame Caroline Bridgeman.

1928-29, viii, Cmd.3196.

**194. DC on Optical Practitioners' Bill**

Chmn. F.B. Merriman; 12 members.

Mrs. Janet E. Courtney.

1927, xi, Cmd.2999.

**195. DC on Part-time Students Examinations**

Chmn. Duchess of Atholl; 9 members.

Miss Eleanor T. Kelly.

1928, NPP, Board of Education.

**196. DC on Puerperal Morbidity and Mortality**

Chmn. Lord Salvesen; 7 members.

Mrs Mary Barbour; Miss M.E. Cairns; Miss Annie M. Fraser.

1927, NPP, Scottish Board of Health.

**197. Safeguarding of Industries Committees**

Light Leather Goods

Chmn. B.A. Cohen; 2 members.

Mrs Margarieta Beer.

1927, xii, Cmd.2837.

Table-Ware

Chmn. Sir P.G. Henriques; 2 members.

Lady[E.] Askwith.

1927, xii, Cmd.2838.

**198. DC on Shops (Early Closing) Acts, 1920 and 1921**

Chmn. Sir W.W. Mackenzie; 13 members.

M.H. Irwin; M.R.H. Philipson.

1927, xii, Cmd.3000.

**199. Committee on Street Offences**

Chmn. H. Macmillan; 14 members.

S.M. Fry; Lady[G.L.] Joynson-Hicks; E.H. Kelly; E.M. Millar; E.B. Wilson-Fox.

1928-29, ix, Cmd.3231.

**200.** DC on Training of Rural Teachers  
Chmn. J.Q. Lamb; 10 members.  
Miss M.M. Allan; A.E. Wark.  
1929, NPP, Board of Education.

## 1928

**201.** Consultative Committee of Board of Education on Books in Elementary Schools  
Chmn. W.H. Hadow; 19 members.  
E.R. Conway; L. Grier; F. Hawtrey; E.M. Tanner.  
1928, NPP, Board of Education.

**202.** DC on Factory Inspectorate  
Chmn. Henderson; 5 members.  
Miss Hilda Martindale; C.D. Rackham.  
1930, NPP, Home Office.

**203.** DC on Maternal Mortality  
Ch. Sir G. Newman; 12 members.  
Dame J.M. Campbell; Mrs Ethel Cassie.  
1930, NPP, Ministry of Health.

**204.** RC on Police Powers and Procedure  
Chmn. Lord Lee; 7 members.  
Miss Margaret Beavan; Dame M. Talbot.  
1928-29, ix, Cmd.3297.

**205.** Committee on Safeguarding of Industry: Handkerchiefs  
Chmn. W.J.U. Woolcock; 2 members.  
Lady[F.J.] Trustram Eve.  
1928, xii, Cmd.3096.

**206.** DC on Training and Employment of Midwives  
Chmn. Sir R. Bolam; 12 members.  
E. Barton. Dame J.M. Campbell; Lady Helen C. Colville; Miss Alice S. Gregory; Mrs Elena Richmond; Miss Katharine J. Stephenson.  
1929, NPP, Ministry of Health.

**207.** Committee on Universities and Training Colleges  
Chmn. R.G. Mayor; 18 members.  
Miss Annie Lloyd Evans; W. Mercier.  
1928, NPP, Board of Education.

1929

**208. Select Committee on Capital Punishment**

Chmn. J. Barr; 14 members.

Miss Ethel Bentham.

1930-31, vi, (15).

**209. RC on Civil Service**

Chmn. Lord Tomlin; 15 members.

Duchess of Atholl; Mrs Barbara Ayrton Gould; M.A. Hamilton; E.M. Lowe; M. Wintringham.

1930-31, x, Cmd.3909.

**210. Committee on Education for Salesmanship**

Chmn. F.C. Goodenough; 31 members.

Miss E. Winifred Mawdsley; L.F. Nettlefold.

1929, 1932, NPP, Board of Education.

**211. RC on English Licensing**

Chmn. Lord Amulree; 20 members.

E. Barton; Miss Edith Neville; Mrs Shena D. Simon.

1931-32, Cmd.3988, xi.

**212. RC on Labour in India**

Chmn. J.H. Whitley, 11 members.

Miss Beryl le Poer Power.

1930-31, xi, Cmd.3883.

**213. Committee on Ministers' Powers**

Chmn. Sir L. Scott; 16 members.

Duchess of Atholl; Countess of Iveagh; E. Wilkinson.

1931-32, xii, Cmd.4060; 1932, NPP, Treasury.

**214. DC on Procedure and Evidence for Determination of Claims for Unemployment Insurance Benefit**

Chmn. Sir H. Morris; 5 members.

Mrs Agnes A. Adams.

1929-30, xvii, Cmd.3415.

**215. DC on Relief of Casual Poor**

Chmn. L.R. Phelps; 7 members.

M. Wintringham.

1929-30, xvii, Cmd.3640.

**216. RC on Scottish Licensing Laws**

Chmn. Lord Mackay; 13 members.

Hon. Mrs Louise Forrester-Paton; Mrs Agnes Hardie.

1930-31, xv, Cmd.3894.

### Appendix 3

#### Members of Selected Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

The appendix lists the original members of those inquiries analysed in chapter five, the chairman's name is given first and the names are listed in the order in which they appear on the initial warrant of appointment. Later appointments are noted only if the commissioner concerned has been included in the tables in chapter 5. Biographical details of most of the men are included in the *Dictionary of National Biography* or *Who Was Who*; some relevant information on their occupations, positions and status is noted below. For biographical information of the women members, see appendix 1. Details of the reports are given in the bibliography.

#### 1. The Royal Commission on Secondary Education 1894-96

Sir James Bryce, Liberal MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1892-94, President of the Board of Trade in 1894.

Sir John Tomlinson Hibbert, Liberal MP, Secretary to the Treasury 1892-95.

The Hon. Edward Lyttelton, Master of Haileybury 1890-1905; brother of Lucy Cavendish.

Sir Henry E. Roscoe, professor of chemistry, MP, became Vice-Chancellor of London University in 1896.

The Very Rev. Edward C. Maclure, Dean of Manchester from 1890.

Rev. Andrew M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield Congregational Theological College, Oxford.

Richard Claverhouse Jebb, Professor of Greek; Conservative MP for University of Cambridge from 1891.

Richard Wormell, teacher, Head Master of Central Foundation School, London 1874-1900.

Henry Hobhouse, barrister and Liberal MP; ecclesiastical commissioner from 1890.

Michael E. Sadler, educationist; became director of the office of special inquiries and reports in the Department of Education in 1895.

Hubert Llewellyn Smith, social investigator and civil servant; became first Commissioner of Labour at the Board of Trade in 1893.

George J. Cockburn, an East India merchant who took up public service on retirement. He was leader and chairman of the Leeds School Board

and vice-president of the School Board Association of England and Wales.

Charles Fenwick, worked as a miner and became secretary to the TUC parliamentary committee in 1890, Liberal MP.

James H. Yoxall, teacher; general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, 1892-94; MP in 1895.

Lady Frederick Cavendish.

Mrs Sophie Bryant.

Mrs Eleanor M. Sidgwick.

## **2. Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes 1909-12**

John Gorell Barnes, first Baron Gorell, former president of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court.

Cosmo G. Lang, Archbishop of York.

Edward G.V. Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby, had held office in Conservative administrations and was Postmaster-General 1903-05.

Lady Frances Balfour.

Thomas Burt, miner and trade union leader, Liberal MP 1874-1918.

Charles John, the Hon. Lord Guthrie, senator of the College of Justice in Scotland.


Sir William Anson, MP (Unionist), Oxford University; Vinerian Reader in English law, Oxford University; chancellor of the diocese of Oxford.

Sir Lewis Dibdin, Dean of the Arches 1903-04 and first Church Estates Commissioner 1905-30.

Sir George White, Liberal MP, ex-president of the Baptist Union.

Henry T. Atkinson, county court judge.

Mrs May E. Tennant.

Rufus Isaacs, KC, Liberal MP, Solicitor-General, <sup>March 1910,</sup>  Attorney-General in October 1910.

Edgar Brierley, barrister and stipendiary magistrate for the City of

Manchester from 1903.

John A. Spender, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, 1896-1922.

Sir Frederick Treves, surgeon. [Appointed in June 1910]

### **3. Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1912-15**

Sir Antony P. MacDonnell, first Baron MacDonnell, former civil servant.

Spencer C. Cavendish, ninth Duke of Devonshire, former Conservative MP, had served in several Conservative administrations; brother in law of Lucy Cavendish.

Hubert M. Burge, Bishop of Southwark.

Sir Kenneth A.M. Mackenzie, permanent principal secretary to the Lord Chancellor.

Sir Henry W. Primrose, civil servant, chairman of the Board of the Inland Revenue, 1899-1907.

Sir Donald MacAlister, physician, principal of Glasgow University, 1907-29; president General Medical Council, 1904-31.

Sir William G. Granet, barrister and railway administrator.

Harold T. Baker, Liberal MP and parliamentary private secretary to R.B. Haldane.

Alfred A. Booth, company director.

Arthur Boutwood

John R. Clynes, Labour MP.

Sir Samuel J.G. Hoare, Unionist MP, succeeded his father as Viscount Templewood in 1915.

Richard D. Holt, Liberal MP.

Percy E. Matheson, fellow and tutor of New College, Oxford.

Arthur E. Shipley, zoologist, master of Christ's College, Cambridge 1910-19.

Philip Snowden, Labour MP; husband of Ethel.

Graham Wallas, lecturer in political science at LSE and professor, 1914-23;



brother of Katharine.

Miss Elizabeth S. Haldane.

Mrs Lucy A.E. Streatfeild.

Arthur C.T. Beck, MP [Liberal, 1906-10; Independent, 1910-22].  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Under-secretary of State for War,  
1912-15. [Appointed July 1912]

#### **4. Departmental Committee on Additional Grants to Scottish Universities 1909-10**

Victor Alexander Bruce, 9th Earl of Elgin, former viceroy of India; had held office under several Liberal administrations.

Miss E.S. Haldane.

Sir Kenelm E. Digby, barrister, KC 1904.

Sir Harry R. Reichel, educationist and writer, vice-chancellor of University of Wales; and Principal, University College of North Wales 1884-1927.

Andrew R. Forsyth, professor of mathematics, University of Cambridge, 1895-1910.

Sir German Simms Woodhead, Professor of Pathology, University of Cambridge from 1899.

Claude Douglas, consultant surgeon.

#### **5. Royal Commission on University Education in London 1909-13**

Richard B. Haldane, lawyer, Liberal MP, lord chancellor 1912-15; brother of Elizabeth.

Alfred, first Viscount Milner, barrister and politician.

Sir Robert Romer, retired lord justice of appeal.

Sir Robert L. Morant, civil servant, chairman of the National Health Insurance Commission, 1911-19.

Laurence Currie, banker.

William S. M'Cormick, administrator, secretary of Carnegie Trust for Scottish Universities.

Edmund B. Sargant, former educational adviser to Lord Milner, and colonial administrator.

Mrs Louise Creighton.

## **6. Royal Commission on Income Tax 1919-20**

Frederick H. Smith, first Baron Colwyn, held a number of company directorships and chairmanships, including chairman of Charles Macintosh and Co. [See Birley, below.]

Sir Thomas P. Whittaker, writer and Liberal MP.

Charles W. Bowerman, secretary of the TUC and its former president, Labour MP.

William Brace, former president of the South Wales Miners' Federation, Labour MP, held office during the Coalition Government.

Ernest G. Pretyma, Conservative MP, had held office under several administrations.

Sir Edmund E. Nott-Bower, former chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue.

Sir John S. Harmwood-Banner, Conservative MP and former Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

Sir Walter Trower, solicitor.

Robert M. Holland-Martin, banker.

Norman F.W. Fisher, civil servant, permanent secretary to the Treasury and head of the civil service, 1919-39.

Sydney Armitage-Smith, principal clerk to the Treasury.

Philip Birley, director of Charles Macintosh and Co.

William Graham, former journalist, Labour MP, 1918-31.

Arthur Hill, banker, company chairman, and chairman of Additional Commissioners of Income Tax for the City of London.

Duncan M. Kerly, barrister and chairman of the Board of Referees.

Mrs Lilian C.A. Knowles.

Halford J. Mackinder, geographer and politician, director LSE 1903-08, taught economic geography in London University, 1895-1925, Unionist MP, 1910-22, knighted 1920.

William McLintock, chartered accountant.

Edward Manville, Unionist MP and company chairman.

Geoffrey Marks, president of the Institute of Actuaries.

Henry J. May, member of the Co-operative movement and secretary to the parliamentary committee of the Co-operative Congress.

Arthur C. Pigou, economist, professor of political economy at University of Cambridge, 1908-43.

Nicholas J. Synnott, chairman of the Bank of Ireland and director of the Great Southern and Western Railway.

## **7. Royal Commission on Lunacy and Mental Disorder 1924-26**

Hugh P. Macmillan, judge, lord advocate in Labour Government of 1924.

John F. Stanley, second Earl Russell, barrister and Fabian.

Lord Eustace S.C. Percy, former diplomat, Conservative MP 1921-37, President of Board of Education, 1924-29.

Sir Humphry D. Rolleston, consultant physician, regius professor of physic, University of Cambridge, 1925-32.

Sir Thomas Hutchison, former diplomat; company director and Lord Provost of Edinburgh, 1921-23.

Sir Ernest V. Hiley, solicitor and town clerk; Unionist MP 1922-23.

Sir David Drummond, physician, president of British Medical Association, 1921, and a vice-chancellor of the University of Durham.

William Jowitt, KC, Liberal MP.

Sir Frank D. MacKinnon, judge, King's Bench division 1924-37.

Harry Snell, Labour MP, 1922-31 and member of the London county council, 1919-25.

Mrs Anna Mathew.

Miss Madeleine J. Symons.

Nathaniel Micklem, theologian and ordained Congregational minister.  
[Appointed November 1924]

## **8. Royal Commission on Food Prices 1924-25**

Sir Auckland C. Geddes, professor of anatomy and former MP, British ambassador in Washington, 1920-24.

Sir John L. MacLeod, solicitor, member of Edinburgh Town council 1905-19 and Lord Provost of Edinburgh and Lord Lieutenant of the County of the City of Edinburgh 1916-19.

Sir Robert H. Rew, civil servant, assistant secretary at the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries 1906-18.

Sir William J. Peat, chartered accountant, member of the Corporation of the City of London 1915-26.

Sir Halford J. Mackinder, see above, pp.379-80.

Frank H. Collier, secretary of the Food Department of the Board of Trade.

Walter T. Layton, editor of the *Economist*, 1922-38; married to Eleanor.

George A. Powell, clerk to Metropolitan Asylums Board, 1922-30.

William E. Dudley, director of the English and Scottish Wholesale Society.

William Grant, shipwright, Unionist MP in the Northern Ireland Parliament 1921-29.

Hugh F. Paul.

Thomas H. Ryland.

Walter R. Smith, trade union official and Labour MP, 1918-24.

Isaac Stephenson.

Dame Helen C.I. Gwynne-Vaughan.

Mrs Ethel Snowden.

**9. Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure 1928-29**

Arthur Hamilton, first Viscount Lee of Fareham, former Conservative MP, had held Government office during WW1.

George R. Blades, first Baron Ebbisham, Unionist MP 1918-28, Lord Mayor of London 1926-27.

Sir Howard G. Frank, estate agent and company director.

Dame Meriel L. Talbot.

Sir Reginald W.E.L. Poole, historian and university lecturer.

James T. Brownlie, trade unionist, president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union 1913-30.

Miss Margaret Beavan.

Frank Pick, solicitor and transport administrator, managing director of London Underground group.

**Appendix 4:****Reconstruction committees and sub-committees**

Details are taken from the report on the work of the Ministry of Reconstruction, *PP*, 1918, xiii, Cd.9231 and the records of the Ministry held in class RECO1 at the Public Record Office.

The first Reconstruction Committee: March - December 1916

This was set up by Asquith, who announced its formation at a Cabinet meeting of 18 March 1916; it was to be analogous with the Committee of Imperial Defence, and was to co-ordinate the work of various advisory committees in different departments as well as those committees which it might instigate. The Prime Minister was the Chairman and the other members were

A. Bonar Law [Conservative: Colonial Office]

J. Austen Chamberlain [Conservative: India Office]

W. Long [Conservative: Health & Local Govt. Board]

Earl of Crawford [Conservative: Board of Agriculture & Fisheries from 11 July 1916]

A. Henderson [Labour: Board of Education until August 1916]

H. Duke [Conservative. Irish Chief Secretary from July 1916]

Marquess of Crewe [Liberal; Lord President of the Council]

Sir H. Samuel [Liberal: Home Office]

W. Runciman [Liberal: Board of Trade]

E. Montagu [Liberal: Duchy of Lancaster until 9 July 1916 when he was appointed Minister of Munitions]

H. Tennant [Liberal: Under-Secretary of State at the War Office until 9 July 1916 when he became Secretary of State for Scotland]

T. McKinnon Wood [Liberal: Scotland, and became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 9 July 1916]

Col. Sir M. Hankey.

The secretary was C. Vaughan Nash and it had a small administrative staff.

There were a number of sub-committees based on existing Board of Trade committees. The names of chairmen at the time of the committees' reports are given in brackets.

Acquisition of Powers [Rt. Hon. Sir George H. Murray]

Agricultural Policy [Earl of Selborne]

Aliens [Rt. Hon. Sir George Cave, MP]

Coal Conservation [Viscount Haldane]

Commercial and Industrial Policy [Rt. Hon. Lord Balfour of Burleigh]

Demobilisation of the Army [Rt. Hon. E.S. Montagu, MP]

Forestry [Rt. Hon. F.D. Acland, MP]

Relations between Employers and Employed [Rt. Hon. J.H. Whitley, MP].

Women's Employment Committee [Major J.W. Hills, MP].

The last two had women members; for details, see appendix 2, nos. 88 and 80. Miss Constance Smith of the Home Office was one of the WEC's two secretaries.

The Board of Trade committees referred to above were also brought under the responsibility of the Reconstruction Committee. They were the

Coal Trade [Lord Rhondda]

Electrical Trades [Sir Charles H. Parsons]

Engineering Trades [Sir Clarendon Hyde]

Financial Facilities for Trade [Lord Faringdon]

Iron and Steel Trades [G. Scoby Smith]

Shipping [Sir Alfred Booth]

Textiles [Sir H. Birchenough].

A document issued in August 1916<sup>1</sup> lists these and a number of others as sub-committees of the Reconstruction Committee. Additional committees were set up.

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<sup>1</sup> Confidential paper produced for the Reconstruction Committee, RECO1/664.

War Pledges [Sir J.A. Simon]  
 Review of Education [Marquess of Crewe]  
 Teaching of Science [Sir J.J. Thomson]  
 Teaching of Modern Languages [S. Leathes]  
 Juvenile Education [J. Herbert Lewis]

The last three included women, see appendix 2, nos.73-75. A further committee was also included which had no Government representation; a sub-committee of the Physiology (War) Committee of the Royal Society on the Food Supply of the United Kingdom, chaired by Professor A.D. Waller. Other committees were required to report to the Reconstruction Committee; some of these can be traced through the records of the Committee, but the papers of many others were returned to their original Departments in 1919.

#### Second Reconstruction Committee: March-July 1917<sup>2</sup>

The membership of the Reconstruction Committee changed after the formation of the second Coalition Government in December 1916 with Lloyd George as Prime Minister. Those members who retained Cabinet positions [Bonar Law, Chamberlain, Long, Crawford, Henderson] continued to serve, but those who had lost their place in the Government were no longer members of the Committee.

By the time the second Reconstruction Committee held its first meeting on 16 March 1917, the membership had been radically altered; it was no longer a Cabinet Committee. A background memorandum<sup>3</sup> explained that the previous Committee could not cope with the demands of wartime as well as planning for peace so the new authority was composed of Lloyd George as Chairman, Montagu as Vice Chairman [effectively in control of the committee] and 14 further members who possessed specialised knowledge in relevant areas. They included M.P.s; "representatives of Labour, both men and women, men of standing in the world of business and finance, and men and women well versed in

<sup>2</sup> Although the committee included two women, it has not been included in appendix 2 as both women were also members of its sub-committees, see pp.384 and 386 and the report of the work of the Ministry of Reconstruction, Cd.9231, 1918, xiii.

<sup>3</sup> In RECO1/776, n.d.?



the social questions of the past and qualified to anticipate the developments of the future".<sup>4</sup> The other members were

Professor W.G.S. Adams

Sir A.M. Duckham

Richard Hazleton

Major J.W. Hills

Thomas Jones

P.H. Kerr

Dr Marion Phillips

B. Seebohm Rowntree

Marquess of Salisbury

Leslie Scott

Sir J. Stevenson

J.H. Thomas

Mrs Sidney Webb

The existing sub-committees continued and new ones were appointed:

Adult Education [Master of Balliol]

Civil War-Workers' Demobilisation [Gerald Bellhouse]

Machinery of Government [Viscount Haldane]

Local Government [Rt. Hon. Sir Donald Maclean]

Acquisition of Land [Leslie Scott]

Ministry of Health [Lord Rhondda]

The first four of these had women members, see appendix 2, nos. 82-3, 85, 87. As well as the subjects of their terms of reference the committees gave special attention to housing, unemployment, physical training, juvenile employment and apprenticeship, the supply of raw materials, and shipping. They were to co-ordinate existing inquiries and initiate new ones to set up a framework for future action.

The work of the committee was divided into seven panels with the members divided between them, supervised by an Advisory Council; and they initiated sub-committees in addition to those which remained in existence from the first Reconstruction Committee. Panels were known by a number and were

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<sup>4</sup> RECO1/776

1. Munitions
2. Agriculture and Forestry
3. Wages and Employment (including Demobilisation)
4. Local Government, Housing, Public Health, Social Welfare, Poor Law
5. Control of Industry & supply of materials; Commercial Policy; Transport
6. Education
7. Legislation

Panel 2 was the only one which had no woman member; Mrs Webb and Dr Phillips both served on Panels 3 and 5, with Dr Phillips on 1 and 6 while Mrs Webb was additionally a member of 4 and 7. Other women were appointed to the various sub-committees as they had been to those already in existence, but the numbers were not large. Their greatest representation continued to be on the Women's Employment Committee [see appendix 2, no. 80], now chaired by Major J.W. Hills and at least seven of its twelve women members were civil servants. The second Reconstruction Committee was shortlived and held its last meeting on 18 July 1917.

The Ministry of Reconstruction: August 1917-January 1919

The Minister was Christopher Addison. When the Ministry was created, the Advisory Council of the second Reconstruction Committee was divided into five sections:

- I Finance, Transport and Common Services
- II Production and Commercial Organisation
- III Labour and Industrial Organisation
- IV Rural Development, including Agriculture
- V Social Amelioration: including Education, Health and Housing.<sup>5</sup>

There were six administrative branches:

- Commerce and Production
- Finance, Shipping and Common Services
- Labour and Industrial Organisation
- Rural Development
- Machinery of Government: central and local, including Health and Education
- Housing and Internal Transport.

The sections were described collectively as the Advisory Council; their work was co-ordinated by the Chairmen's Committee made up of the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the various sections. Its chairman was Sir Henry Birchenough. The other members were

- A.A. Allen
- E. Bevin
- Hon. Herbert Gibbs
- Sir Clarendon Hyde
- W.L. Hitchens
- Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse
- E.J. Husey
- Sir Charles Metcalfe
- Leslie Scott
- Rt. Hon. J.H. Thomas

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<sup>5</sup> Details taken from Ministry of Reconstruction Memorandum 'Constitution and Work of the Advisory Council', undated, RECO1/751.

The Women's Advisory Committee was chaired by Lady Emmott. The other members were

Lady Birchenough  
Miss Lilian Harris  
Miss Susan Lawrence  
Dr Marion Phillips  
Mrs Maud Pember Reeves  
Viscountess Rhondda  
Mrs Lucy Streatfeild  
Miss Madeleine Symons  
Miss Margaret Tuke.

It had a number of sub-committees, see appendix 2, no. 96. In addition, Sections IV (Rural Development) and V (Social Amelioration) included sub-committees with women chairmen and women members. For sub-committees of Section IV see appendix 2, nos. 107 and 117, and for Section V see nos. 93, 97 and 102. These committees are sometimes also described as committees of the WAC.<sup>6</sup>

The Ministry took over many of the existing reconstruction committees and set up the following new ones.

Interpretation of the Term 'Period of the War' [Mr Justice Atkin]  
Supply of Building Materials [J. Carmichael]  
Financial Facilities [Sir Richard V. Vassar-Smith]  
Currency and Foreign Exchanges [Lord Cunliffe]  
Financial Risks attaching to the holding of Trading Stocks [F.C. Harrison]  
Trusts [Charles A. McCurdy]  
Storage and Transit [Sir Charles Metcalfe]  
Engineering Trades (New Industries) [Hon. H.D. McLaren]  
Chemical Trade [Sir Keith W. Price]  
Civil War Workers Resettlement Co-ordination [Vaughan Nash]  
Housing (Financial Assistance) [Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse]

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<sup>6</sup> The work of many of the committees continued through various administrative reorganisations and that has led to some confusion over their naming.

Increase of Rent and Mortgage (War Restrictions) Act, 1915 [Hon. Lord Hunter]

Wages Awards [Sir John Simon]

Advisory Housing Panel [Marquess of Salisbury]

Only the last two had women members, see appendix 2, no. 84 for the Advisory Housing Panel and p.357 for the Wages Awards Committee.

In January 1919 Christopher Addison was appointed Minister for Local Government and the work of the Ministry was combined with that of the Ministry of National Service in January 1919, under Sir Auckland Geddes. Both Ministries were amalgamated with the Board of Trade between May and August 1919 and were formally abolished on 19 December 1919.

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