

3

**Men's League for
Women's Suffrage.**

0 22
0 201

**REPORT OF
SPEECHES**

DELIVERED AT A

Great Demonstration

HELD IN THE

QUEEN'S HALL,

ON

Tuesday, December 17, 1907.

Chairman—

HERBERT JACOBS, Esq.

Speakers—

W. H. DICKINSON, Esq., M.P., L.C.C.,

THE EARL RUSSELL,

ISRAEL ZANGWILL, Esq.,

Rev. R. J. CAMPBELL,

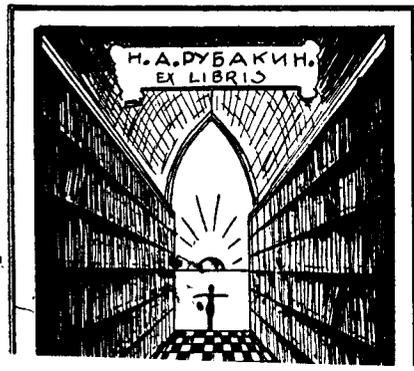
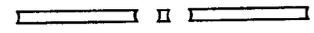
Rev. CANON HICKS.

OFFICES: 38, MUSEUM STREET,
LONDON, W.C.

PRICE 3^d.

D 23
10 231

MEN'S LEAGUE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.



131

A GREAT DEMONSTRATION in support of Women's Suffrage was held under the auspices of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London, W., on Tuesday, December 17th, 1907, at 8 p.m. The chair was taken by Herbert Jacobs, Esq., Chairman of the Executive Committee, who was supported on the platform by the Earl Russell, Rev. Canon Hicks (Manchester), Rev. R. J. Campbell, W. H. Dickinson, Esq., M.P., Israel Zangwill, Esq., H. C. Brodie, Esq., M.P., Mrs. Despard and Mrs. How Martyn (of the Women's Freedom League), Miss Strachey and Miss Mason (of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies), and others. The large hall was crowded, there being hardly any vacant seats, with the exception of the gallery, which was closed to the public. During the interval, between 7.30 p.m. and 8 p.m., an organ recital was given by Mr. Benjamin Dale, A.R.A.M., F.R.C.O.

The CHAIRMAN : Ladies and Gentlemen, the Men's League for Women's Suffrage was formed in March of this year, and this is the first public meeting we have held upon any scale of importance. The League is now established upon a firm basis, and it has successfully passed through all those dangers which beset young societies. Its continued existence is assured, but we all hope for its speedy extinction! We hope for that with the knowledge that its dissolution can be brought about only by the passing of an Act for the enfranchisement of women. (Applause.) Now of course the object of the League is to help the women to get the vote; but we intend to help them in our own way. There are many active and important suffrage societies composed entirely of women, and mixed societies composed of men and women, which are doing a great work in furthering this cause, but our society consists of men only, and of men who are determined to use

the votes which they possess in order to confer a similar privilege upon women. (Applause.) And we look forward ultimately to the attainment of our object by the legitimate use of political power. But in the meantime we shall do all we can to win over our opponents, and to stir up our lukewarm supporters into enthusiasm. Now the League numbers amongst its members persons of all shades of political opinion—(hear, hear)—from the bluest Tory to the reddest Socialist, and all these different elements are working harmoniously and loyally together in support of our great cause. Even the speakers who are assembled on this platform to-night are possibly not in entire agreement upon every important topic, but they are in entire agreement upon the question of Women's Enfranchisement. (Applause.) Some of you may wonder why we have not asked some of those brilliant and eloquent women who are leading this movement to address you to-night. Well, our justification for not doing so is this: we thought that upon our first formal introduction to the public we ought not to seek any outside help, so far as speakers were concerned. But when I look at this magnificent meeting, knowing, as I do, that every seat in the house has been sold, and that there has been a demand for more seats than we could give, I cannot help expressing my gratitude and thanks to the other suffrage societies which have done so much to help to make this meeting a success. (Applause.) Before I sit down, I must refer to the kind messages and sympathetic letters we have received from those who have not been able to be present to-day. And first among these I must mention one from Mrs. Fawcett. (Applause.) Mrs. Fawcett, in writing to express her regret for her absence, says to us, "I regard the formation of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage as marking a very important advance in our long struggle for elementary justice, and I believe it is men more than women whom we must now convince that our cause is just and expedient, and that the men electors will be able to urge Women's Suffrage on Parliament more effectually than non-voters can ever do. (Applause.) We shall always remember with gratitude the formation of the first organised association of men whose sole aim was to gain justice for women." (Applause.) We have also received letters from the Bishop of Hereford—(applause),—Archdeacon Wilberforce—(applause),—and many Members of Parliament, including Sir William Bull, who tried to get out of another engagement to speak for us to-night, but was unable to do so, from Sir Andrew Torrance, Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. Leif Jones, and others. I have also received a telegram from Mrs. Bright, who has worked so long in the cause, in which she says, "Mrs. Jacob Bright sends hearty congratulations, and thanks the Men's League. Forty years ago Jacob Bright introduced your present Bill, which passed second reading, defeated in Committee by Liberal Government." (Applause.) That is from the Riviera. But, last of all, I have a message from a land of the oppressed, from a lady whose name

it is impossible for me to decipher.* This lady writes from the Kingdom of Poland on behalf of the Polish Women's Union, and says, "Dear Sir,—A true enthusiasm is awakened by the united splendid work of the League, so that an effort for justice in one country reaches beyond its confines and encourages even those in remote semi-civilised parts of the world." (Applause.)

I will now call upon Mr. Dickinson to move a resolution in favour of Women's Franchise.

Mr. W. H. DICKINSON, M.P.: Mr. Chairman, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, the resolution which has been put in my hands reads as follows:—"That in the opinion of this meeting the Parliamentary Franchise should be given to women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men." It is a resolution of great simplicity, and I do not know that I need explain it to you to any extent. I agree with the Chairman in welcoming the presence of this influential and numerous gathering with reference to this important subject. The League has no particular powers of attraction; it is not a League of Suffragettes or of Suffragists, for both of these words have assumed the feminine gender. It is a League which consists of mere men—(laughter)—of men who are, however, desirous, in the words of the Secretary, when he wrote to me and asked me to attend this meeting, of doing all they can to enlist and unite the forces of thinking men throughout the country in support of this great cause. We do not proceed by any uproarious methods; we content ourselves with appealing to the thoughtfulness of men, and, in saying that, I do not wish to appear to be criticising or commenting upon the methods adopted by others. (Hear, hear.) In this very slow-moving country of ours no great movement can be carried through unless it is accompanied by what people at the time very likely think to be outrageous conduct—(applause)—and those who claim the vote have always had to claim it with a considerable show of energy which the ordinary individual has discountenanced and ridiculed. (Applause.) But, as I say, we can do without it, because what we have to do is to show to the men voters in this country that the claim, the demand, that women are making to be allowed to participate in the vote, is not only a claim which justice must yield to them, but a claim which political expediency ought to be only too ready to extend. (Applause.) Now, those who are in favour of Women's Suffrage have been pleading for it for over half a century, but it is only in very recent times that the claim has become of such a nature as to command the attention of the people, as a whole. Miss Lydia Becker—(applause)—worked for years. She was looked upon as a crank, but now we have raised a statue to her. (Applause.) But the cause in former years has been looked upon more with ridicule than as a serious matter. The demand for women's rights has

*Miss Teresa Lubinska.