

SUB-COMMITTEE C

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UNREVISED

JOINT COMMITTEE
ON INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

taken before Sub-Committee C
of the Joint Committee on

INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Die Mercurii, 26^o Julii, 1933

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SUB-COMMITTEE C.

DIE MERCURII, 26° JULII, 1933.

Present:

The MARQUESS of LOTHIAN in the Chair.

Mr. Butler.
Major The Hon. E. Cadogan.
Mr. Cocks.
Mr. Davidson.

Mr. Foot.
Sir Samuel Hoare.
Miss Pickford.

DELEGATES:

Dr. Ambedkar.
Begum Shah Nawaz.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

Lady LAYTON, Mrs. O. STRACHEY and Sir PHILIP HARTOG, are called in and examined as follows:

Marquess of Lothian.

C1. Lady Layton, are you acting as spokesman of the Delegation?—(Lady Layton.) Yes.

C2. You represent the list of Associa-

tions and Societies mentioned in the Memorandum?—Yes.

C3. And certain other individuals?—Yes. The Memorandum is as follows:

MEMORANDUM 50. EVIDENCE ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE FOR INDIAN WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.

COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE.

1. The British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise represents over two million women voters of this country, belonging to associations with widely differing aims, and including members of all political parties. Besides associations a number of Members of Parliament, both men and women, and others specially interested in the subject have joined the Committee.

We are united in our desire to register in the strongest terms our protest against the inadequacy of the proposals of the White Paper in regard to women's franchise, and to urge the Joint Select Committee to make recommendations which will secure a ratio of women to men voters, both for the Federal and Provincial Legislatures, at least equal to the ratio of one woman to four and a-half men proposed by the Indian Franchise Committee.

REASONS FOR THE BRITISH COMMITTEE'S SUPPORT OF THE CLAIMS OF INDIAN WOMEN TO AN ADEQUATE FRANCHISE.

2. The reasons why our Committee feel impelled to take action in this matter can be very briefly stated.

(a) The problem of making a new Constitution for India is one which affects Britain as well as India. The

provisions of that new Constitution will have to be approved by Parliament, and the responsibility for those provisions must rest ultimately on the electors, both men and women.

(b) Our Committee feel a deep concern and responsibility in regard to the provisions specifically affecting women. This is the only occasion on which organised British women as fully enfranchised citizens have had the opportunity of effectively influencing the destinies of the women of India.

(c) The Women's Movement has always been international in its outlook, bringing together women of all countries working with similar aims and ideals, and thus fostering a feeling of solidarity among women. But between the women of Britain and the women of India the bond is particularly close. It is a bond, not only of association under a common flag for 150 years, but a bond strengthened by the ties of love and friendship in common social and educational work. British women have watched with sympathy and admiration the rapid progress of the Women's Movement in India, and are anxious to place at the service of the women of India all the help that they can give from their own wider political experience.

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(d) The disabilities, legal and social, from which the women of India still suffer, their lack of educational opportunities, and the fact that for 150 years the government of India has been almost entirely in men's hands, make it imperative that women should be given adequate opportunity and power to express their views in the new Constitution.

(e) It is the declared policy of Government to see that the interests of all sections of India's population are fairly represented, and our Committee wish to emphasise the fact that for no section of the community is this more necessary than for the women of India.

British Women and the Franchise.

3. Not many years have passed since the women of Great Britain achieved full rights of citizenship. Every step thus won—opportunities of education, the entry into learned professions, rights affecting the status of wives and mothers, political rights—was won after a long and arduous struggle, to which the entire working lives of innumerable women were devoted and on which vast sums of money were expended. Especially during the closing years of the struggle, much bitterness was engendered and many unhappy incidents took place. It would be a grave misfortune if in India, where the work of women in many fields of social and educational effort is so sorely needed, a similar struggle became necessary.

4. Members of our Committee realise how much the vote has meant to the women of this country. It has served both as a means of self-protection and as an opportunity for bringing their influence to bear for the benefit of the whole community, especially in the realm of social welfare. With regard to their own protection, for instance, it is noteworthy, that during the first eighteen years of this century, only four Acts were passed relating specially to the position of women, whereas, during the nine years after their partial enfranchisement, some 20 Acts were passed dealing with questions such as the removal of sex disabilities, the admission of women to Parliament, to the Bench and to the legal profession, etc., to the rights of guardianship over children, to the position of unmarried mothers, to widows' and orphans' pensions, and so on. On questions affect-

ing the whole community, the influence of women voters has been most noticeable in the increasing support given to causes such as disarmament, housing and education.

Indian Women and the Franchise.

5. It may be argued that advances for British women were spread over a long period and that the small measure of franchise proposed by the White Paper is a fair instalment considering the present status of women in India. It has always been brought up as an argument against the extension of the franchise to any new category of voters in this country, and no doubt in others, that they are not sufficiently educated, politically or otherwise. This argument does not take into account the great strides which the women's movement in India has made during the last few years, stimulated very largely by the political desire for national self-government. A generous measure of enfranchisement is the surest way of directing these energies along constitutional lines. Experience has shown that the most thorough and effective method of providing political education is to give the actual responsibility of the vote. Further, those members of our Committee who have worked in India wish to endorse the statement of the Education Committee of the Statutory Commission, that "The innate intelligence of the Indian woman, her feeling of domestic responsibility, her experience of household management, make her shrewd, penetrating, wise within her own sphere. In all matters of educational and social reform, the counsel and the active work of women are essential both in administration and public affairs."

6. The grave legal and social disabilities which Indian women have for years been attempting to remove affect the efficiency of the whole nation. Girls' education still lags far behind the boys', the evil of child marriage is still rampant, maternal mortality is terribly high, the provision of medical aid for women totally inadequate, the laws of inheritance inequitable. At present the sum spent on girls' education in British India is about one-seventh of that spent on the education of boys. Although there are some 250,000 women factory workers, there is still only one woman Factory Inspector. As testified by the unanimous opinion of medical women in India, very little progress can be made in providing adequate

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medical aid for women unless and until women administrative medical officers are appointed in each province.

On such grounds it is essential that women should be placed in a position to secure attention to their needs from the very foundation of the new Constitution and during its most important formative years. The framing of a new Constitution presents a unique opportunity which will have passed, once the constitutional structure has taken definite shape and hardened along definite lines. Fresh vested interests will grow up, and it may be increasingly difficult for women to obtain a fair share of educational funds and a portion of administrative posts if these are not obtained at the outset.

CRITICISM OF THE FRANCHISE PROPOSALS OF THE WHITE PAPER. ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS.

7. The proposals of the White Paper actually reduce the voting strength for women suggested by the Indian Franchise Committee to a nominal ratio of one woman to seven men for the Provincial, and one woman to 20 men for the Federal Legislatures. Can it possibly be claimed that such a franchise will give women an effective voice?

The Literacy Qualification.

8. The reduction in numbers of the women's vote in the White Paper proposals as compared with those of the Indian Franchise Committee is due to the dropping of the proposed test of simple literacy as a qualification for women voters. This test would have, for women, the very great advantages that it would increase their voting strength as time goes on without further legislation, that it would apply alike to the unmarried, the married and the widowed, to those who have received their education at home as well as those who have been to school, and that it would serve as a stimulus to education, both that of girls and that of adult women. It has the unanimous support of women, both in England and in India. According to the proposals of the White Paper, only in the province of Madras is it retained. In four provinces the educational standard now demanded is no less than matriculation or school-leaving certificate, a standard which very many educated women have had no chance of attaining, for lack of suitable schools or because they were in purdah. *We members of the British Committee for Indian*

Women's Franchise, desire to protest most strongly against this modification of the Franchise Committee's proposal, and urge the Joint Select Committee to accept simple literacy as a qualification for the franchise for women in all provinces. If the obstacles alleged against it are administrative, and these can be overcome in Madras, it is difficult to believe that they are insuperable in other provinces. Evidently they were not so considered at the time when the Franchise Committee undertook its detailed investigations in India only a year ago and made its recommendations.

Application for the Vote.

9. A second, hardly less important, whittling down of the Franchise Committee's proposals in the White Paper is the provision that a woman qualified to vote in respect of her husband's property must apply to be put on the register, though her husband is not required to do so.

This proviso seems to the Committee not only an unfair discrimination between men and women, but one calculated to reduce the estimated voting ratio of one woman to seven men to something very far below that estimate. Even in this country it would be found very irksome, but for Indian women there is in most places so much less freedom of movement than for Englishwomen that such a provision, in the opinion of many well qualified to judge, could not fail to result in a very substantial reduction of the potential voters.

We note with satisfaction that the White Paper itself states in this connection—"His Majesty's Government are very anxious that the proportion of women electors should be adequate, and further consideration of the above arrangements may be necessary." Our Committee, therefore, urge most strongly, that this new discrimination between men and women should not be imposed.

If, however, the Joint Select Committee should unfortunately come to the conclusion that the condition of application is unavoidable, then it will be most necessary that the numbers thus lost should be made up by one of the alternative qualifications suggested in the Memorandum submitted by Miss Rathbone (para. 16), or in some other way.

Franchise for the Federal Legislature.

10. For the Federal Legislature, in order to secure an adequate proportion of

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women electors, the Indian Franchise Committee made two proposals, viz.: (1) that for the first election the names of all women entered on the provincial rolls under the literacy qualification should be included as voters and subsequently retained on the roll and (2) that the educational qualification for women after the first election should be the Upper Primary Standard.

Both these proposals are dropped in the White Paper, which lays down no special qualifications for women.

Yet it was expressly stated by the Prime Minister in his letter of instructions to the Indian Franchise Committee that:

"His Majesty's Government attach special importance to the question of securing a more adequate enfranchisement of women than the existing system, which applies to women the same qualifications as to men, and has produced a women's electorate numbering less than one-twentieth of the total male electorate."

And the White Paper itself again states that:

"His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the importance of a large women's electorate for the Federal Assembly."

In spite of these pronouncements, the ratio of women to men is left at its present low and totally inadequate figure. The reasons given in the White Paper are administrative difficulties and objections to a differential franchise based on education. Our Committee cannot feel that these difficulties are insurmountable (cf. Memorandum by Miss Rathbone, para. 7).

If, as we hope, the qualification of simply literacy is accepted for the Provinces, then the roll so prepared should be used also for the first election for the Federal Legislature, as recommended by the Franchise Committee.

Alternatively, our Committee supports the suggestions made in several Memoranda,* that an addition to the women's

electorate may conveniently be made by adding the wives of the men property voters for the Centre, whose names will be readily available from the rolls of the voters for the provincial councils.

Franchise on Husband's Property Qualification.

11. Lastly, the British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise are aware that there is a strong feeling among many, though not all, of the organised women in India against the proposed enfranchisement of women on the property qualification of their husbands. We should like to point out that these Indian women's associations took their stand from the beginning on adult suffrage, because they believed it to be the only means of giving representation to all interests, including equal voting strength to men and women. We understand that they have now put forward as an alternative adult suffrage in urban areas only.

Our Committee fully realise the importance of meeting the desires of Indian women, but in case the Joint Select Committee should consider it impossible to grant their demand in this respect, we wish to register our carefully considered view that the granting of special qualifications to women, such as the Married Women's qualification, would represent a far nearer approach to real equality than the granting of a paper equality which would in fact enfranchise only a minute proportion of women.

Members of our Committee desire to record their own experience of the vote given on the husband's property qualification. This was in use in this country from 1918 to 1928 to supplement the independent property qualification. Although there was at first some hesitation in accepting this qualification, it worked quite satisfactorily and caused no resentment in practice in spite of the large number of professional and industrial unmarried women in England who were excluded at the time from exercising the vote. It raised the status of all women by giving them an effective voice in the government of the country, and that of married women in particular by showing that the State valued their experience as mothers and home-makers. It was also found that men who had had misgivings as to the wisdom of granting the suffrage to women were reassured by a conviction that the mothers

* In the Memoranda submitted by (1) Mrs. Subba Rao on behalf of Women Members of Local Bodies in the Madras Presidency; (2) Mrs. P. K. Sen on behalf of Calcutta Mahili Samiti, Bengal; (3) Mrs. Hensman on behalf of 450 women from India; (4) Mrs. P. Subbarayan; (5) Miss Eleanor Rathbone.

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of families were likely to prove a stabilising element in the community and to exercise their vote with a due sense of responsibility.

Apart from adult suffrage, the wife's vote is the only qualification suggested in the White Paper, which enfranchises immediately any large number of women. Should it be dropped and no other qualification substituted in its place, the women's vote would fall to about 2 millions for the whole of British India, making it entirely negligible in any single constituency and for any single candidate.

OTHER PROPOSALS SUPPORTED BY THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

Upper Chamber.

12. No mention is made in the White Paper of any provision as regards women in the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature. Our Committee urge that provision should be made to secure the inclusion of a certain number of women in that Chamber and that the qualifications required of members should be adjusted so as to facilitate this.

Fundamental Rights.

13. We note from the White Paper (page 37) that His Majesty's Government proposes to provide for what are commonly called "fundamental rights" in two ways, namely, by including certain provisions in the Constitution Act and by recommending others not suitable for statutory enactment for inclusion in a pronouncement by the Sovereign. Our Committee urge that in both classes of provision, the case of women be taken specifically into account. In matters especially of "personal liberty and eligibility for public office," it is desirable to guard against discrimination on the ground of sex no less than of caste or religion. The Report of the Minorities Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference, 12th November, 1930, to 19th January, 1931, states that:

"One of the chief proposals brought before the Sub-Committee, was the inclusion in the Constitution of a declaration of fundamental rights safeguarding the cultural and religious life of the various communities and securing to every individual, without discrimination as to race, caste, creed or sex, the free exercise of economic, social and civil rights." (Page 46.) In Great Britain, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act

(1919) provides a precedent for dealing with a number of disabilities based on sex in a single comprehensive Act. The experience of that Act also, however, warns our Committee of the necessity for very careful drafting, if comprehensive declarations of this kind are to be really effective in achieving their purpose.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

14. The British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise urge the Joint Select Committee:

(1) *To accept simple literacy as a qualification for the franchise for women in all Provinces:*

(2) *Not to impose the condition of application for women voters qualified in respect of their husband's property qualification:*

(3) *In the event of the condition of application being considered unavoidable, to replace the number of voters thus lost by some alternative qualification:*

(4) *To increase the ratio of women voters for the Federal Legislature by reverting to the proposals of the Indian Franchise Committee or by adding the wife voters from the Provincial rolls:*

(5) *To make provisions for the inclusion of women in the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature:*

(6) *To include women in any declaration of "fundamental rights."*

In conclusion, the members of this Committee desire once more to urge that, on whatever qualifications the franchise is finally based, the women's voting strength should be made up at the very least to the ratio of one woman to 4½ men, both for the Federal and Provincial Legislatures.

The Simon Commission, the Round Table Conference, the Indian Franchise Committee, and His Majesty's Government itself have repeatedly acknowledged the importance of securing an adequate voting ratio for women. If the Joint Select Committee sincerely desire to satisfy the legitimate expectations aroused among the women of India and of Great Britain by these repeated declarations, we feel confident that means of surmounting the administrative difficulties can and will be found.

The Association of Assistant Mistresses.
The Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries.

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[Continued.]

The British Federation of University Women.
 The Head Mistresses' Association.
 The London and National Society for Women's Service.
 The National Council for Equal Citizenship.
 The National Council of Women.
 The Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations.
 The Women's Co-operative Guild.
 The Women's National Liberal Federation.
 The Young Women's Christian Association.
 The National Women's Citizens Association.

The Countess of Iveagh, C.B.E., M.P.
 The Viscountess Astor, M.P.
 Mr. S. V. T. Adams, M.P.
 Dr. Margaret Balfour, late Chief Medical Officer, Women's Medical Service, India.

Miss Caton.
 Miss Thelma Cazalet, M.P.
 Captain V. A. Cazalet, M.C., M.P.
 Lady Chatterjee.
 Mrs. Coatman.
 Mrs. Copeland, M.P.
 Mrs. Corbett Ashby.
 Miss F. M. Graves, M.P.
 Sir Philip Hartog, K.B.E., C.I.E.
 Lady Hartog.
 Miss Florence Horsbrugh, M.P.
 Mr. J. Campbell Ker, O.S.I., C.I.E., M.P.
 Mr. Hamilton Kerr, M.P.
 Mrs. Lankester.
 Lady Layton.
 Miss Megan Lloyd George, M.P.
 Mr. Geoffrey Le M. Mander, M.P.
 Major J. Milner, M.C., T.D., LL.B., M.P.
 Mr. A. H. F. Molson, M.P.
 Mr. W. Nunn, M.P.
 Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P.
 Lady Reed.
 Dr. Agnes Scott, late Chief Medical Officer, Women's Medical Service, India.
 Mrs. Shaw, M.B.E., M.P.
 Sir Walter Smiles, M.P.
 Mrs. Tate, M.P.
 Miss Irene Ward, C.B.E., M.P.
 Col. Rt. Hon. J. C. Wedgwood, D.S.O., M.P.

Franchise for Indian women? It has no other purpose?—That is quite correct.

C5. And you claim to represent some 2,000,000 voters, which, I suppose, means the Members of these other Associations?—That is so.

C6. Should I be correct in interpreting your Memorandum to mean that the primary consideration you have in mind is that the ratio of women to men voters should be at least equal to one woman to 4½ men, rather than any specific detail?—Yes, that is so.

C7. I do not know whether you have had an opportunity of reading the evidence which has been published in the last few days in regard to the Women's question?—Yes, I have followed it very closely.

C8. Do you want to add anything to your Memorandum in the light of that evidence?—I should like to be able to do so.

C9. Will you make a statement now, then?—I should like to recall, first of all, that the Organisations I represent do really cover practically all the organised women in this country of all Parties, and doing every kind of work, and that we have set out in our Memorandum submitted to the Committee what they consider to be the minimum conditions that will ensure a reasonable enfranchisement of women under the new Indian Constitution. These proposals are far more modest than the claims of some of the Indian Women's Organisations; but though we are fully at one with the Indian Women as to the immense importance, from a social, economic and political point of view, of giving as great a measure of political power as possible to Indian women, we recognise the practical difficulties expounded in the Lothian Report, and we realise that the full enfranchisement of women means a revolution in India, and that it can only be accomplished by stages. The Women's Organisations have, however, been profoundly disappointed to see that the White Paper has still further whittled down the Lothian Report, and in particular we regret that the Secretary of State in his evidence has defended the proposition that wives of present property voters to the Provincial Councils should only be enfranchised on application instead of being put on automatically. This will so reduce the number of women on the electorate as to make it utterly inadequate. If I have followed the Secretary of State's evidence

C4. Would I be correct in saying that this is a Committee specially constituted for dealing with the problem of the

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correctly, the main reasons for this are administrative difficulties; first, the administrative difficulty of enrolling wives; and, secondly, the administrative difficulty of providing polling accommodation for so large a number of women at the first elections. As regards this first administrative difficulty, could not this be overcome by enrolling the wife merely as the wife of "Mr. So-and-So," and making the husband responsible for her identification in the polling booth at the first election, instead of attempting to get the actual names of the wives from each individual voter? I understand that a canvass of these voters is, anyhow, made at regular intervals for Revenue registers. It would surely not add very considerably to the administrative burdens if, at the same time, a note was taken as to which property voters had a wife or wives living. As regards the second point, the White Paper suggests that its proposals will enfranchise for the Provincial Councils one woman for every seven men as compared with one woman for five men in the Franchise Committee's proposals, but the Secretary of State admitted, if I interpreted his evidence correctly, that if three million out of the 4,000,000 wives do apply, which is what is assumed in making up this proportion of one in seven, the administrative advantages in this respect would not be worth the differential treatment of the women, but, obviously, expected that the application would be some figure far less than this, which would mean that we should in the end get a proportion of women to men enfranchised of something like one in 16, or even something as low as one in 20. It would only be in this way that you would get this second relief, a relief which I venture to say cannot be obtained if the White Paper original proportion of one in seven actually takes place. This only corroborates what we have said in our Memorandum, that application by the wives and dropping the literacy qualification will really enfranchise only about one woman to about 16 or 20 men—not one woman to every seven men. In this country when the registers were left to the Party machines to bring up-to-date, we all know how very few individual men and women took the initiative, in advance of the excitement of an election, to get themselves enrolled. How much more must this be so for both men and women in India? Yet we ask the women,

thousands of whom are in Purdah, and miles from any polling station, with few postal or transport facilities, many of them unable to read, to take this very difficult step. Is it not a wholly unreasonable demand? In any case, the number who will vote at the first election will be much smaller than at subsequent elections for all these and other reasons. When it is more fully realised that issues of burning interest to the women are under discussion, and they realise the power of the vote, this will change. We should like further to suggest that, as with us, the women who apply will do so mostly at the instigation of the most strongly organised political party; in India this undoubtedly is the Congress party. Would it not be wiser to encourage the political consciousness of the more moderate elements in the community, by not increasing the difficulties under which they must in any case labour? We would like to remind the Secretary of State and the Committee of the increasing part that the women have taken in the recent political movements, and the importance of winning their support in the building up of the new Constitution. We are quite certain that if the proposals in the White Paper are not improved in this respect, there will be such strong feeling among all the organised Indian women in India that they will undoubtedly stir up difficulties which will create quite as great administrative difficulties as the proposals attempt to meet. We feel it would be so much wiser to enlist their support by treating them fairly and justly at the outset than to create unrest among all the Indian women who have so strongly supported in the past all attempts to improve the health and social welfare of the people. It would be so much better to enlist their support at the outset than to drive them to desperate action because they have been unfairly treated. Furthermore, I want to make it quite clear that the organised women of this country, of all political parties and employed in every walk of life, are not prepared to accept the administrative difficulties laid before us by the Secretary of State as a sufficient reason to hand over to the male voters of India the problems of Child Marriages, Child Welfare, Guardianship of Infants, the relations of husband and wife, the laws relating to property, the whole gamut of problems whose solution or neglect will

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Sir PHILIP HARTOG.

[Continued.]

do more than anything else to decide if India is to be a peaceful, happy, healthy and economically sound nation. A Federal Assembly in which women's voting strength is one in 20, so low as to be of no practical value, and in the Provincial Assembly one in 16, is totally inadequate. We urge you to accept, remembering that the Simon Commission after full investigation proposed a proportion of one to two, as the last Round Table Conference did, the proportion of one in five as an unalterable basis on which to build—

Mr. Isaac Foot.

C10. A minimum basis?—Yes. I am obliged for the correction. —and throw upon the Provincial Governments during the next three months the responsibility of finding the most administratively possible way of bringing this about. In reply to the defence of the Government against granting a specially reduced literacy qualification to women, we ask, can you defend the very inferior educational opportunities given to women, and whether these do not justify the difference? Sir Philip Hartog will give evidence on this point. As to the administrative difficulties, I should just like to make one point. We note that in the White Paper the differential qualifications to be prescribed for the scheduled classes are still under consideration. If the literacy qualification suggested for this purpose by the Franchise Committee is likely to be applied there, could not similar methods for its application be equally well arranged for the women? This has been the only method proposed so far for increasing at the first election the proportion of women voting for the Federal Assembly. We notice also that you consider it necessary to insert in the Constitution a definite period during which no change can take place in the Franchise at all, and later say that the Federal Legislature will, presumably, settle further advances for the Federation, and the Provincial Legislatures for the Provinces. This means that this is the last chance for the British Parliament and public to influence the matter at all, and give the women of India, who are anyhow in a minority in the community, the power to get rid of the grave injustices under which they suffer, to-day, to an extent probably greater than in any other country in the world. We will not dwell on these in detail; Miss Rathbone has done that

adequately in her memorandum, which we strongly endorse, but in a country which has more than 5,000,000 wives under the age of 15 and more than 100,000 child-widows under the age of 10, and a maternal mortality estimated in some districts to be 40 per 1,000, and even in the most healthy districts 20 to 30 per 1,000, this, surely, should give us pause before we hand over the power over these women without adequate representation for them to stand up for their own rights and improve their conditions. For the last 150 years individual English women have done heroic service for women in India, but until the last decade it could be truly said that the men of this country had the determining voice in regard to the status of women in India, so far as it could be affected by the Governing administration. Also, since the Montagu Reforms, women, though enfranchised on technically equal terms, have only had a voting strength of 1 in 20, and the tendency of the new Indian administration, so far as Indians have had control in the Provinces, has been still further to increase the discrepancy between girls' and boys' education and to do very little to improve the medical treatment of the women in the villages. Since the enfranchisement of women in this country, we feel that we share the responsibility, and that we should be betraying the interests of Indian women if we acquiesced in Parliament setting up a Constitution under which their representation is extremely small, and the prospects of its extension extremely remote. For that reason, we take a very strong stand that we shall not be prepared to accept anything which gives a proportion of women to men in the new Constitution of less than 1 in 5. I should like to make one or two remarks which we have not made in our Memorandum with regard to the Federal Assembly and the Council of State, if that is in order now. We deprecate very strongly the election of women to the Federal Assembly only by the transferable vote of the Provincial Councils. We feel that it is most important that the nine women in the Federal Assembly should really be free to speak on behalf of the women of the whole country, and that if they are elected by the transferable vote of the Provincial Councils, by the communal conditions of those Councils they will inevitably be communal women, instead of being free and specially chosen because of their capacity to understand and

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Sir PHILIP HARTOG.

[Continued.]

speak for the needs of the women throughout the country. Alternative methods of election have been put forward in Miss Rathbone's Memorandum. We only want to emphasise here our reasons for this objection. The organised women in India and the women who have taken an active part in bringing about the Sardar Act and in pressing for improvement in the condition of education and health, are most anxious to be sure that they will be actually in the Federal Assembly, and we very much fear that the methods proposed may not have that result, but that you will have women who will vote as they are told rather than women who will be independent spokesmen. With regard to the Council of State, we should very much like to know and we wish to urge that women should be eligible; we are not clear whether they are so at present, and we wish to secure that the conditions of election should be such as to make the eligibility of a considerable number of women possible; and, thirdly, we make the suggestion that, if Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans can have 10 seats reserved for them to be chosen by electoral colleges among all the representatives of those communities in the different Councils, it might be practicable for the women members of the Provincial Councils also to form an electoral college and elect one or two members. I have no other particular remarks to make supplementing the evidence. Sir Philip Hartog wishes to speak on the literacy qualification, and the practicability of that, and Mrs. Strachey will speak on the reasons why the English Women's Organisations are so determined, through the practical experience of what we have achieved through our enfranchisement, to see that the Indian women have the same opportunity that we have. (Sir Philip Hartog.) May I explain, first of all, why I appear in this position. I have never been a politician in my life. I have been driven into fervent advocacy of Women's Franchise in India, because of my investigations as Chairman of the Education Committee of the Simon Commission. I discovered at the very outset that the most important, and the most neglected factor in Indian education was the education of the girls. You will understand in a moment why I say that. In India, according to the latest census figures, 18½ per cent. of the men as a whole are literate; 2.9 or 3 per cent.

of the girls. In the schools you find one-seventh of the total amount spent on education spent on the girls who form half the population. You find a tragic wastage in the schools. I suppose about 60 per cent. of the money spent on primary education of the boys, and about 90 per cent. of the money spent on the primary education of the girls, is wasted because it needs four years under present conditions in India, with the large mass of illiterate mothers, to produce literacy, and only a fraction of the children stay for more than one year in the schools. I would like to correct my figure later if necessary. I think it is only about one-tenth of the girls who reach Standard IV. I put down that tragic neglect of girls' education and the education of the mothers to the Indian public, to the Indian politicians, and to the administrators of India, Indian and European alike. The policy that I found almost everywhere (I do not say there were no exceptions) was a policy of spending all that you reasonably can on the boys, and, if there is something over, spend it on the girls. The years 1917 to 1927 include the period of reforms. The increase in the direct expenditure on boys' education was, roughly speaking, seven times that on the girls', 832 lakhs for the boys and 127 lakhs for the girls, so that instead of trying to diminish the difference between boys' and girls' education the difference has been increased, and the latest census figures show naturally that the difference in literacy has been increased. It is quite obvious that a fundamental change is essential. I do not think you will get that change until the women play a greater part in Indian politics than they have played up to the present. That is the expressed view of the Simon Commission, and it is the view of the Lothian Committee; it is the expressed view of His Majesty's Government, though I see nothing in the White Paper to translate that view into facts. At the bottom of these objections to using literacy as a qualification, what have we? We have the phrase "Administrative difficulties; administrative impossibilities." To anyone who has worked in India that phrase is only too familiar. I suppose that I was met by it every week, certainly every month, during the five years during which I was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dacca, and it was part of my work to show that what I was told was adminis-

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tratively impossible was, in fact, possible, and I suppose really it is not only in India that one has been told that. Looking round this table I suppose there is hardly one of you ladies and gentlemen who has not done things which you were told were administratively impossible. So I am not at all alarmed by that phrase. I am only alarmed by the state of mind which it indicates. It corresponds exactly to the state of mind of the Governments who reported on the Simon Report, and I would urge this Committee very strongly to ask for those Provincial Reports in which it is stated that the application of the literacy test, which is recognised as possible in Madras, is impossible elsewhere.

Major *Cadogan*.

C11. Would you repeat that?—I should like to ask that the Committee should ask for the Provincial Reports which attempt to show that what is possible in Madras in respect of literacy is impossible in Bengal. Have they been circulated?

Mr. *Isaac Foot*.

C12. The Reports which Sir Philip refers to are the reports which are already available—the comments of the Governments?—They have not been published.

Mr. *Butler*.] Command Paper 3700.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C13. What report are you referring to? Are you referring to documents to the Simon Commission or to the Franchise Committee?—No; the report to which the Secretary of State referred in his evidence. Are those available?

Mr. *Butler*.

C14. Those were not the reports to the Simon Commission?—No the reports on which the White Paper was based.

Mr. *Isaac Foot*.] Does Sir Philip refer to the Secretary of State's statement as to the administrative difficulties in making inquiries about wives of electors.

Mr. *Butler*.] The despatches to which I think Sir Philip refers are the confidential comments to Parliament on the Lothian scheme which were sent by the Provincial Governments.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C15. As well as the Government of India?—That is to say, they have been treated as confidential.

Mr. *Butler*.

C16. They are in the normal course of administrative procedure regarded like so many other documents as confidential?—I suggest that they should not be regarded as confidential to the Select Committee whatever they are regarded as in respect of the general public, because you will not get to the bottom of this until you see what the actual objections are. I do not mean to say that there is not such a thing as an administrative impossibility, but it is a phrase used very often, as we all know in India to dress up a bogey sometimes.

Mr. *Butler*.] These questions were fully gone into in the evidence which the Secretary of State and his advisers, including Sir Malcolm Hailey, gave before the Joint Select Committee, and these administrative points were put to his advisers, including Sir Malcolm Hailey and Sir John Kerr, and answered in some detail, particularly in Questions 7416 and 4717 of No. 21 on the 21st July, 1933.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C17. Are they the only points that the Local Government as well as the Government of India have referred to, or are there any more points with regard to those administrative difficulties of which they make so much?—Might I be referred to the actual question?

Mr. *Butler*.

C18. Question 7416 was asked by Sir Hari Singh Gour and answered by Sir Malcolm Hailey. Sir Malcolm referred to "a test electoral roll on the new franchise in certain selected areas. They were so selected as to be more or less illustrative of what we might expect to find when we came to prepare the full electoral roll afterwards." In that question, and in his answer to the next question Sir Malcolm details some of the difficulties which a typical local government has experienced in making an electoral roll?—Yes, I read those, but I think, if I may say so, there is absolutely not a word about literacy in these two things. There is not a word.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C19. I understand your main point is your argument that literacy is a practicable qualification?—It has been recognised I think in the White Paper itself that it is practicable because it has been put forward as one of the means of in-

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creasing the proportion of the special classes—increasing the proportion of voters up to 10 per cent. in two Provinces so that is recognised by Government itself, and I cannot imagine what the special difficulty can be in other Provinces. The test is perfectly easy. I rely not only upon my own opinion, but by questioning some of the most experienced district officers of the past who are now here. It is perfectly easy for a village officer, controlled by a tahsildar as suggested, to dictate a passage to a would-be elector and to listen to that elector read it. The whole thing can be perfectly public. It is a perfectly easy test. I cannot help thinking that those difficulties have been very much exaggerated, but as I say it is quite impossible for me to come to grips with the administrative difficulties until I see on paper what they are supposed to be, and none of the public has yet seen what they are supposed to be.

C20. Does that conclude your evidence? Yes, Sir. (Mrs. Strachey.) I have only three points to put forward. I cannot claim to speak of the Indian conditions, because it is 20 years since I was there, but what I can claim to speak of is the way the Suffrage Movement catches hold of women, and that is certainly true of women of all races and all nationalities. I was in the British Suffrage Movement from the time I grew up to the time we got the full enfranchisement. I was its Parliamentary Secretary during the critical years, and I really know what effect the Suffrage Movement has on the females of the population. The more active politically-minded of them go perfectly berserk about it; they can do nothing else, and they can think of nothing else; they go perfectly mad for their own rights and throw everything to the winds. That is what you are laying up for the women of India if you do not put them into this new constitution when it starts. You are preparing, not only a suffrage agitation, but a militant agitation which will prevent all the more active minded women in India from helping on the new constitution. You are dragging them out of that and driving them into a new agitation, to trouble and impede the progress of the Government in India.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C21. You say it will emphasise the sex disqualification which the women of India would resent?—Yes, of course they

would. They would start in an inferior position of a serious kind—a numerically inferior position—and it is inevitable that within a few years this same Suffrage Movement which bit us so hard would be troubling the Government of India. I think, unless a reasonably large number of women get enfranchised now, before the thing starts, you are laying up serious trouble for the future Constitution of India; not only that, but you are throwing away the help of Indian women which could be so considerable in making smooth the progress of the new Constitution. I speak very passionately on that subject because I was right in it here in England. I saw women of ability and real possibilities of public service forced to waste their time on this barren, stupid, silly agitation for rights, when they might have been helping on the things they really cared about: welfare of children, welfare of social conditions, the various interests of their country that were real to all of them; but they could not get them because of this barrier of disenfranchisement that stood in the way.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C22. May I know what was the proportion of women to men that you got when you first were given the vote?—Yes. Under the first enfranchisement of women in this country, which was partial, with an age limit of 30, not adult suffrage and not on the same terms as men, in England and Wales there were 6,900,000 women voters and 10,200,000 odd men voters: that is nearly seven to 10. In the United Kingdom as a whole there were 8,400,000 women to 12,000,000 men which was 17 to 24. The proportion was about one to 1½ in each case. That was followed, after 10 years, by complete equal franchise, which at this moment gives a very slightly higher number of women voters than men in the country. My second point deals with the results of enfranchisement, again arguing by analogy from what has happened here. In the 12 years which preceded the getting of the vote in this country there were four Acts passed directly relating to the special interests of women as apart from the interests of men. They were an Act dealing with midwives, an Act dealing with married women's power to hold property (that was a very small Act only relating to Trust Estates), an Act dealing with women's qualifications to sit on County Councils, and one Act

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dealing with Affiliation Orders for separated wives. Those were the only four Acts relating to women passed between 1902 and 1914. Taking out the War years, when everything was abnormal, we then come to the Suffrage Bill which was passed in 1918, and in the eight years which followed that there were 18 Acts directly affecting the interests of women. I put aside things like housing and other things, which relate obviously to both men and women; but these are directly on women's own position and special interests: eligibility for Parliament, affiliation orders, midwives, sex disqualification removal, intestacy (affecting the right of women to hold property), nurses' registration, maintenance orders, infanticide, married women's maintenance, Criminal Law amendment (relating to the age of consent), law of property (intestacy again), matrimonial causes, sale of drink to children, guardianship of infants, summary jurisdiction (dealing again with separation orders), widows' pensions, adoption of children, and the registration of midwives, and maternity homes.

Mr. Isaac Foot.

C23. What period was that?—Between 1918 and 1926—eight years. It ran along at the rate of nearly three a year, whereas before it was merely one every three years.

C24. Have you a list now showing what has been the spate of legislation affecting women since you have become a majority in the country?—No, I have not. I think that has made no appreciable difference. With the partial franchise there was not any appreciable difference in results as distinguished from the complete franchise.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C25. How many Acts do you say were passed during the earlier years of the present century?—From 1902 to 1914 there were four, and from 1918 to 1926 there were 18. I have not taken it beyond 1926 because, as the position of women becomes more and more equal in this country, it becomes more and more difficult to differentiate between what are really women's Bills and what are not. It is not only legislation that has altered in this country. You find an enormous increase in the number of women taking part in local government since the Parliamentary franchise was

granted. Women have had the vote for local government for a considerably longer time, and they have been eligible for local councils since 1907, but they were taking a small part in that work until the Parliamentary franchise was given, which aroused their interest in public questions and drove them, so to speak, back to the detailed administration of those questions and to an interest in local government; and every year since 1918 more women have come forward and have been elected on to borough councils, county councils, rural district councils, urban district councils, and all the local government bodies.

Major Cadogan.

C26. I hope the witness does not think I am unsympathetic—this has nothing to do with my feelings about the question—but are you establishing an analogy between English women and Indian women? You are giving information about English women?—Yes, certainly I am trying to establish an analogy.

C27. Do you maintain that the education and position of English women are the same as those of Indian women?—No, clearly not. We needed the vote in spite of being well educated and well able to look after ourselves. The Indian women need it even more because of the difficulties arising from the fact that education has not reached them yet. Much as we needed it, they need it more, and if it did all this for us, what will it do for them? That is my argument. I was saying it was not only Acts of Parliament which have resulted here; it does afford an increase in the interest and contribution which women have been able to make to local government. It is also the entry of women into administration, which is an exceedingly important thing, and, particularly, obviously important in a country where a large proportion of our women population are in purdah. If you do not have women officials, how can you hope to reach the women in purdah with the health regulations or any of the other domestic legislation of your Government? It seems to me that the question of using the women in the administration of India is so obvious, and that, with the experience we have got in this country, following the Parliamentary franchise, you do get, in fact, an increase of women in administrative positions, it affords an additional argument for extending the franchise to women in

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India, in the hope also that that may lead to an increased use of women in the administration, major and minor positions both, of the Government of India. That is my second point. The third point I can put very shortly. It is, that the British women in this country who are enfranchised citizens do feel very strongly that they have a responsibility to the only nominally enfranchised women in India and they are really concerned about it. They are passionately anxious to help, and I am bound to say, though, perhaps, it is not orthodox to say so, that unless women in India under this Constitution do get a fair enough proportion to be able to have some political weight in the first few years of the new Constitution, we British suffragists are going to help the women of India to try to get that altered in India.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C28. In every possible manner?—In every possible manner.

Marquess of Lothian.

C29. Does that complete your evidence, Mrs. Strachey?—Yes.

C30. Now, Lady Layton, I think your Deputation has set out very fully the main thesis for the Suffrage. What I would like to do is to get a little more clearly what suggestions you have to make for dealing with the administrative difficulties which were put forward by the Secretary of State and others in public evidence. I think I am right in saying there is no lack of sympathy. The problem is largely a practical problem. Now so far as the Provincial proposals are concerned, I understand your first proposal is that, instead of having the name of the individual wife, if there are difficulties in obtaining that, the roll should simply register "wife of X Y Z," namely, the man voter. That is your first proposal?—(Lady Layton.) That is so.

C31. Your second proposal is that the literacy qualification should be restored on the ground that it cannot be administratively impracticable if it is used in Madras and is used as one of the qualifications for the Depressed Classes? Is that correct?—That is correct.

C32. Now turning to the Central Legislature, what is your proposal there (I am not certain that I got it very clear) for dealing with a situation which admittedly will only produce one woman in 20?—We have no further proposals

with regard to that, except to restore the literacy qualification. My other proposal with regard to the Federal Assembly was with regard to the election for the reserved seats.

C33. Have you considered at all the possibility of enfranchising the wives of the existing Assembly voters?—We should welcome that, and be quite prepared to accept any qualification of that kind, if it was found administratively more possible. Might I at this point just add one word with regard to the literacy qualification, which Sir Philip Hartog did not touch upon? We are very anxious to see the literacy qualification restored, because there are so many Indian women who are well educated, who have been educated in their homes, and are now taking a very active part in the political movements of their country and in other ways, and who would be enfranchised by that method and by that method alone. They are not on school registers, because they have not had the opportunity, either through purdah or because there were not the schools for them, to take any particular kind of examination, and it would clearly not be possible to increase the number of women who can pass any kind of educational test for many years to come, on account of the difficulties of having sufficient teachers and getting the schools going, and so on. So we do lay particular stress on the restoration of the literacy qualification for the first two elections.

C34. Then, turning to the special representation of women in the Assembly, you object to the system by which the nine women members are elected by the Provincial Councils, on the ground that it will not produce the type of woman member that the women will want?—Yes; and further on the ground that they are the only members who will be indirectly elected. All the other members of the Assembly will be directly elected.

C35. Is your alternative that, as has been suggested for the Provincial elections, special constituencies should be created in each Province in which men and women should vote, which should return that one woman as representing the Provincial women to the Assembly?—That is one proposal. We have made several proposals. Another proposal is that in the capital cities of the Provinces there should be a special constituency. We do not lay any particular stress upon what kind of constituency is made; we do only lay stress upon the importance of

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those women being elected in a constituency of some kind so that people will get used to electing women to the Federal Assembly, and the women in the Federal Assembly will be conscious of their responsibility to actual men and women for the work that they are doing.

C36. In that constituency, there should be both men and women voters—not women voters only?—We should prefer that.

C37. Then the other practical point was the representation in the Council of State. Your suggestion there is that instead of its being left vague what eligibility qualifications may make it difficult, it does not make it impossible for women to be returned; that women should be treated like the Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans and the women members of the Provincial Councils should be made members of an electoral college for returning one or two women. Am I correct in saying that these are the practical proposals that you want considered for dealing with the administrative difficulties?—That is so.

Sir *Hari Singh Gour*

C38. I understood Lady Layton and Sir Philip Hartog to question the statement that has been made by the Secretary of State, or rather by Sir Malcolm Hailey, with regard to the administrative difficulties anticipated, on the ground that the administration at the present moment is all man-made and man-run, and you suggest that if this inquiry were made through the medium of women and there were some women honorary workers and stipendiary workers appointed for the purpose of preparing an electoral roll for the women of India, that administrative difficulty would disappear?—I feel convinced that that is so.

C39. But when you have the difficulty at the present moment, for example, of the purdah system, that is to say the seclusion of women system, when the low paid village accountant getting a salary of about £1 a month, £12 a year, goes to a circle of villages, the women naturally do not want to come before him, but if you have a school mistress, for instance, in that locality to go round and put down the names of all women, there would not be the same difficulty?—That is so.

C40. At the present moment, the administrative difficulty that is pointed out

by the Government really exists because of machinery of men being universally employed for the purpose of getting at women voters. Is that not so?—That is quite so.

C41. Consequently, what you demand is that women also should be employed for the purpose of securing the electoral roll of women voters and then the question of purdah and seclusion would not appear at all?—We have not made any specific proposal of that character. I am not quite clear from Sir Hari Singh Gour's question whether he is speaking of the application of the wives or of the literacy qualification.

C42. I am really speaking of the administrative difficulty which the Secretary of State stated to the Joint Select Committee of getting all women on the register, and, therefore, making the rule more rigid in the case of women that only the wives who put in an application should go on the register?—I think our answer to that would be, first of all, that undoubtedly both women's organisations, teachers and women inspectors, could be utilised in places where there was likely to be any difficulty in getting the names of the women; but it would be still easier, it seems to me, to revert to our actual proposal, that at the first roll, when it might be difficult to enlist all these outside people, it should be sufficient to find from the male voter whether he had a wife, or not, and to put it down merely as the wife of "Mr. So-and-So." When the voter goes to the poll, the husband would be responsible for her identification and the name could be taken; and on a second poll, you would have the individual names; but for the first poll, which is, I imagine, the primary difficulty administratively, that seems to be the simpler solution. If that is not sufficient, undoubtedly the suggestion that is put forward by Sir Hari Singh Gour would meet with our entire approval, and I can say that the organised women of India have immediately replied, on hearing that this objection had been made, that they were quite certain that they could assist any investigation of that kind that was made and see that it was successfully carried through.

C43. Now the next point I wish to draw your attention to is that even after all is said and done and the women get what they want, their number of votes in the Local and Central Legislatures

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would be very small compared with the number of men who would be returned, and that for the last 150 years, under the reform enfranchising women, removing their age-long disabilities for the acquisition and inheritance of property and improving their social status, social reformers in India, both in the Legislature and outside, have been confronted with these difficulties—though the difficulties would still remain, and women will have to fight their own battle for a long time to come, but now that Parliament is establishing responsible Government in India, do you not think that it is up to Parliament to appoint a Committee to inquire into the present status and disability of the women of India, and to take a bold step, at any rate, to place them on a reasonable footing of equality, and then let them work out their own salvation in the future Legislatures?—I am not quite clear as to what Sir Hari Singh Gour means by his question.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] We have been pressing upon the Government that Parliament professed to be the trustees of the people of India, and we have been pressing upon the Indian Government, and through the Indian Government, the British Cabinet—

Chairman.] Sir Hari, is this a proposal which relates to the Constitution?

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] Yes. This is a proposal which deals with the fact that Parliament is now going to transfer its powers, and, in transferring the powers, what we suggest is that these radical disabilities, from which the women of India have been suffering for a long time past, should be removed by Parliament by appointing a Committee and giving them such reasonable facilities at the present moment before announcing its decision in this matter.

Marquess of Lothian.] Do you mean that the Parliamentary Committee should alter all the Legislation of India affecting women? I think the idea is rather that this is a matter for India. That you are creating Legislatures which will be empowered to deal with these things, and the question is whether the Women of India are going to have an adequate voice in those Legislatures to see that matters affecting them will be properly dealt with.

Mr. Davidson.] Does Sir Hari really mean this, that the future of the women

of India should be a matter for the Legislature of India?

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] No. My point of view is this, that the disabilities from which the women of India suffer, and have suffered, for a long time past, might be at least partially removed at the time that the new Constitution is promulgated by a Committee being appointed. During the Simon Commission there was the Hartog Committee on Education, a Committee on Franchise, and Committees on various other subjects dealing with the Constitution. It is suggested that there should be a Committee appointed for the purpose of eradicating some of these outstanding evils from which the women of India suffer and then for the rest leave them to help themselves.

Mr. Isaac Foot.] I suggest, with all respect to Sir Hari Singh Gour, that that is a matter which would be for the discussion of the Committee and not for questions to these ladies.

Marquess of Lothian.] I think so, yes.

Begum Shah Nawaz.] May I add one thing? Most of the disabilities from which the women of India suffer are social disabilities, and no Parliamentary Committee can possibly remove them.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] The next point I wish to ask is this. Sir Philip Hartog has very rightly pointed out that there is a tremendous amount of wastage of girls who are brought into the school for primary education, and the Hartog Committee emphasised that fact in their valuable Report submitted to the Simon Commission. Has Sir Philip any suggestion to make as to how this wastage might be reduced, if it cannot be eliminated?

Marquess of Lothian.

C44. Sir Hari, may I ask what has that got to do with the Constitution? As I understood, Sir Philip's argument was an argument for seeing that women should have adequate representation in the Legislature which will have to deal with these questions. Is that not correct?—(Sir Philip Hartog.) Yes.

Marquess of Lothian.] I think we have got to keep these questions to the points which have a bearing upon the Franchise and the new Constitution?

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] Very well; then I have finished.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C45. I want to know something from Sir Philip Hartog about literacy. Is it

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not a fact, Sir Philip Hartog, after all the experience you have had in connection with the Education Committee, that in most of the homes in the villages the girls study at home. Most of the literate women that you will find in the villages have read, more or less, in their own homes?—I am afraid, Begum, that is not a matter of personal knowledge. I have heard that said, and what is quite certain is that if you take the wealthier classes in the villages, you will find the children do not go to the schools, but if they are educated, they are educated at home; they must be; there are no secondary schools in the villages.

C46. If the educational qualification is to give the vote only to women who are holding some certificate or another, either of primary standard or matriculation, would it not mean that most of the prominent women workers belonging to my generation as well as one or two generations back, would not get a vote under the educational qualification? I do not get one, because I do not possess any certificate of primary standard or matriculation?—I can say quite certainly that a considerable number of the most distinguished women in India would not get a vote, if there had been a literacy test, or if they had had to depend upon passing matriculation, or some school register.

C47. Would not it mean that by not accepting literacy you are keeping out a most useful, intelligent electorate that you ought to have for the new Constitution?—I should say that you would exclude a number of very able women unless they came in under some other qualification, such as the husband's property qualification, or their own property qualification.

C48. You said something about indirect election to the Legislative Assembly. Supposing that the proposal embodied in the White Paper of the indirect election to the Federal Assembly were to stand as it is, would not it mean that in most of the Provinces where the extremist party would be in power, because they would be the majority in the Provincial Legislatures, women belonging to that party alone will be elected as members of the Federal Assembly and *vice versa*? In the case where some of the orthodox parties will be in power, in many cases women belonging to the moderate section will not have representation on the Federal Assembly?—

(Lady Layton.) I think that is so, and it is because of that that we feel that if you have an election in any constituency women will have a chance of standing really as representative women and will be elected as against any woman who stood as a communal woman, if you have a general constituency; we are so anxious that that should happen for the reason that it is the only way of educating the people what the women's question means and how Parliament can touch it, and it is the only way of educating women for the time which is bound to come after the first two elections, when they will have to be elected on their own merits and their own strength and capacity to pull a constituency. We feel that, if they are elected indirectly to the Federal Assembly, when the first elections pass, and the period when they have reserved seats passes, they will not have had the opportunity of electoral experience which is necessary and of putting themselves before a general constituency, which is the only way in which they would have a chance of being elected later on.

C49. You would agree with me, would you not, that if there are to be reserved seats for women, such seats should be provided for them in all the Provincial Legislatures, in the Upper Chambers in any Province where they are constituted and in both the Central Legislatures?—I would certainly agree, particularly in the case of Provinces which have not now got reserved seats. We understand that they have not been reserved because they are backward Provinces, and that seems to us the very reason why it is most necessary that you should have women on the councils. In those councils, the condition of the women and the power to make themselves felt on the councils, to improve those conditions, would be far greater than in the more advanced Provincial Councils such as Madras, where the women are sufficiently organised and strong enough to bring pressure to bear, even if they have not got actual representation.

C50. Under the White Paper proposals there is to be a high property qualification for membership of the Upper Chamber. I think you are aware that the women of India are asking that this high property qualification should be supplemented by an educational qualification in order to make more women eligible for membership of that House. Would not you be

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prepared to support that claim of the Indian women?—May I ask if the Begum Shah Nawaz is referring to the Council of State?

C51. Yes?—If that is the only method by which eligibility of any women to the Council of State could be effected, we should be willing to propose that, but the other method that we put forward, of the electoral roll, might be more on the same footing as the present elections for that Council.

C52. In paragraph 13 of your Memorandum you lay stress on the fundamental rights clause for women. You feel strongly, as the women of India do, do not you, that equality between the two sexes with regard to their fundamental rights should be made clear, either in the Constitution itself, or it should find some place somewhere in His Majesty's Proclamation, or in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governors?—Indeed, we do, and we realise fully the difficulties we have had in this country in combating the fact that these fundamental rights have not been adequately recognised until such a very recent date. At the same time, we are conscious of the danger of any statement about fundamental rights which might in any way be a limiting factor, because we realise that that may be more dangerous than to have no statement at all.

C53. Supposing, Lady Layton, that the Joint Parliamentary Committee or the Local Governments and the Government of India think that, instead of the wives' vote, they can propose some other qualification which would make the numbers almost the same as those recommended by the Indian Franchise Committee, you would have no objection to its being accepted, would you?—We should have no objection to its being accepted, provided that it gives the women a sufficient power in all constituencies, rather than in particular constituencies. To increase the number of women voting in certain constituencies—in urban areas, for instance, and not in the rural areas—though better than leaving the women in the condition envisaged in the White Paper (because it is essential that the women should have power somewhere) would not be so good, in our view, as that the women, under some method of franchise, should have a sufficient voting strength in every constituency, because, when it comes to the discussion of Bills and the possibility

of carrying out legislation on the women's behalf in the Provincial Councils and in the Federal Assembly, the thing that matters is that you can bring influence to bear on all your Members of Parliament. The fact that you can influence 13 per cent. of them is not much use, even though that influence can be a very weighty one. It is quite true, as the Indian women themselves state, that they are perhaps more organised in the towns, and you may have a more educated expression of the women's view in the towns and it might be very valuable, as soon as practicably possible, to have an increased franchise in the towns before it is possible to extend it throughout the country. But we do stand by our first proposals, that we cannot accept a position which leaves the women less represented than one woman to five men voters, not in one or two constituencies but throughout the country.

C54. One of the reasons given against women becoming voters in such large numbers as recommended by the Indian Franchise Committee has been this, that some of the local governments and the Government of India think that it would mean too much pressure on administrative machinery, and the numbers might be so large that there is a fear of the administrative machinery breaking down. You would agree with me, would you not, that if that happens to be the case, it is high time that the British Government realised their duty towards half the population of the country and that, instead of making the numbers of enfranchised women less, they should reduce the numbers of enfranchised men?—I entirely agree with you.

C55. Lady Layton, you said this morning that we were suffering from many social disabilities. You would agree with me, would you not, that if the British Parliament cannot directly help us in the matter, the best method that they can adopt of indirectly helping the women of India would be to give them a good proportion of the voting strength of the country?—I not only agree with you, but I would go much farther. The only excuse that the British Government has got for not having improved the conditions of women in India has always been, as we have maintained, that they were so bound up with the social conditions of India that only the Indians themselves could alter those conditions. We are now handing over to the Indians themselves this responsibility. We are

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all the time laying great emphasis on the necessity, while handing those over, of safeguarding the rights and improving the disabilities of those classes of the Indian population who are in a minority, or who are suffering under any unusual treatment. We are taking special care of the labour population. We are taking special care of the scheduled castes. It is incomprehensible to us that, that being so, we should be content to leave the women in such a position of weakness that they admittedly cannot bring a sufficient influence to bear on Parliament to conquer their disability and to do the things which I am sure in this country the British Government would wish to see done in India, but which we have always held we were unable to do because we could not interfere with the social customs.

Mr. Davidson.

C56. Can you point to any provision in the White Paper which prevents a woman standing on an equality with men (an equality has been the basis of your plea) in any general constituency apart from the special reserved women's seats which appear in the Constitution?—It is quite true that the women are treated on a technical position of equality; we do not gainsay that, but in the present position of Indian women that technical equality leaves them without any real equality. Take the last Montagu proposals. The women have an equal voting strength with the men on a technical equality. They vote on the same property basis, and it is true that in the White Paper they are given a technical equality on the educational qualification, but they have not got equal opportunities with the men, because no Hindu woman is allowed to hold any property, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as Sir Philip Hartog has pointed out, the possibilities of education for the girls have been so infinitesimal compared to that of the boys that it has been impossible for them to take advantage of them and to be educated. It is for those reasons that we are claiming a differential qualification for the women (we admit it) because the women of India are not as we were in this country on a sufficiently equal basis to start with to be able to get representation equally.

C57. I would specially like to ask Mrs. Strachey, with whom I have had conversations in the past, whether, having once granted rights, you can take them away,

and do you propose permanently to place women in a superior position (whatever the developments in India may be) over men by making a provision in a permanent Constitution?—(Mrs. Strachey.) It is not a permanent Constitution. My answer is that you are not making permanent provision. After a period of years the electoral arrangements will be re-considered. You say you cannot take away again the extra rights.

C58. Is it easy to?—It is entirely speculative. How can anyone answer that, but it seems to me certain if the women are taking advantage of getting the social equality, which we hope they will get under this, they themselves will be demanding equality of rights with men backwards as well as forwards just as we are inclined to do in this country. (Sir Philip Hartog.) May I say a word on that point? The Secretary of State at Answer 7316 dealt with this question of a differential educational qualification. He said: "First of all, we have found the gravest possible objections urged, I think, in almost every Province in India, against a differential education qualification for women." But he gave no details whatever; exactly the same story. If I might just answer Mr. Davidson's question as to the possibility of taking away rights which have been once conferred, I think it would be practically impossible to remove a woman from the register at a later stage who had been admitted under a differential qualification, but it would be quite possible not to add any more when the opportunities for boys and girls were equal.

Mr. Davidson.] I was thinking not so much of the actual franchise as representation.

Major Cadogan.

C59. Is not the answer that obviously the whole thing will have to come up for review? For instance, the whole question of reservation of seats, communal representation, and so on?—(Lady Layton.) Yes.

Major Cadogan.] It is not like our English constitution where we have not had these artificial things, and, obviously, it is implicit in this Constitution which it has been proposed to give to India, that they must come up for revision. Is not that right?

Mr. Davidson.

C60. The only point was that I was rather puzzled, because the whole of the

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plea (I recognise it very well) has been equality as between men and women, but, at the same time, there is a plea that there should be not equality but preference and differentiation both in representation and in qualification?—May I answer that?

Marquess of *Lothian*.] Is not the point this, that, while there is legal equality, the effect of the White Paper proposals is that only one woman will get the vote as against 15 men at the Centre, and one woman as against 20 men in the Provinces?

Mr. *Butler*.

C61. That is an interpretation which we cannot necessarily shoulder. Might I give a further reference to Sir Philip Hartog? Questions 7433 onwards also refer to the difficulties?—(Sir *Philip Hartog*.) I was going to refer to them.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C62. Is it not the fact that almost all the women's organisations are not asking for any reserved seats. All they ask is that you should give them their full voting strength, 50-50?—(Lady *Layton*.) That is what I would have liked to say to Mr. Davidson. The Indian women themselves would like adult franchise with absolute equality, but, as that is not a practicable possibility, we are asking for the nearest equivalent to it in voting strength. We do not think one in five is sufficient. Without having adult franchise we think there ought to have been a much closer proportion than that, but we are prepared to support that as a minimum proposal, but the Indian women themselves do want in the long run, and in everything they have said they have stood for, equality, and, as you get closer to adult franchise in India they will be the first to ask that any special reservations and special conditions shall be removed. With regard to the communal questions which Major Cadogan spoke of, I understand that this Committee is not dealing with that, and that the reservation of seats is all part of that decision, and that therefore we are really not at liberty to give any answers on that point.

C63. Is it not a fact that some of the women belonging to the moderate section are prepared to accept these reserved seats just because they feel it will not be possible for them for a long time to

come to get their full voting strength, that is one woman to one man?—That is so.

C64. In almost every country women are supposed to be a conservative element. You would agree with me, would you not, that if the women of India, by getting this voting strength, have some of their social disabilities removed, there would be a tremendous stabilising force under the new Constitution?—I agree with you, although my experience of India is a very brief one, but I saw sufficient of India to realise what a very big influence the woman does play, whether in purdah or out, and in the home life, and I think there is no doubt in our own minds and from what we have heard from others, that it will be a tremendous stabilising influence in India once the women have had the political influence which we all need before we can bring our weight to bear; and once they have had the education and the opportunity of administrative work it will make a tremendous and profound difference in the whole development of India.

C65. Would I be wrong in saying that if the united demands of almost all the women's organised Indian bodies that are at present working for educational progress and social uplift are not given full consideration by the British Parliament at this stage, it will only mean that they will be turning their activities to slogans such as "No Taxation without full voting strength"?—That is what I think is likely to happen, both from one's experience of the activities which are now taking place in India and of what happened in this country. (Sir *Philip Hartog*.) Might I just supplement what Lady Layton has said and the Begum has said about the conservative influence of women?

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C66. Just give us the reference; I think we all know the Simon Commission Report by heart?—Yes. It is my own Report, page 151, Section 13.

Dr. *B. R. Ambedkar*.

C67. I would like to ask one question. I do not know whether you agree with me, but I suppose when you press for votes for women, I think you also desire that the franchise should be so devised that the women who will be brought upon the register will be drawn from all strata of Indian society, and not necessarily drawn, either from the upper strata or

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the middle strata or the lower strata exclusively; that there ought to be some proportion of the women on the electoral roll to the communities from which they are drawn?—As far as is practically possible, certainly.

C68. I mean, it is not your case that you want this mathematical ratio of 1 to 4 or 1 to 5, but apart from that ratio, you would also desire that all women from all sections should be on the register?—Certainly, as far as possible, we do want to feel that the urban and rural voters and the different sections will be adequately represented.

C69. You will also agree, I suppose, that if the education qualification or the property qualification were fixed higher, the result of that would be that you would be getting on to the electoral roll women drawn from one section of Indian society alone?—That is so. I would supplement that by saying that if it were administratively possible, we should welcome, and we have pressed in our Memorandum, that the wives of the lower property qualification should be enfranchised, and not only the wives of the Higher Property qualification.

C70. What I am anxious to get at is this—whether you attach importance to the point which I am putting to you, namely; a well proportioned distribution of the women's voting strength throughout the population, or whether you merely attach importance to the proportion of the man voter as against the woman voter?—We attach importance to both those factors, but we think that the women's interests for the moment are sufficiently safeguarded on this particular question. If you have a sufficient number of women enfranchised in all the districts for them to represent the other women, the women who are not enfranchised, we would like to see it as low as possible, and if it is put at a certain place now we would like it to be moved as soon as practically possible. We ourselves would certainly wish to see it as low as possible. We would be prepared to ask for adult franchise, if it were practically possible, but we realise it is not administratively possible.

C71. Might I put the same point in a somewhat different manner? Of course, all women are interested in matters of social welfare; that is quite true. The woman's point of view may be quite common, but you will also realise that schemes of social welfare are going to

cost money, if they are to be put through and that would require taxation?—Yes, I quite appreciate it would.

C72. And all women may not take the same point of view with regard to that; they are likely to divide on the basis of the class to which they belong?—Yes. I can give you two answers to that. First of all, take the education point of view. If you have a certain amount of money to divide on education, women of every class would agree that it should be spent equally on men and women, whereas, if you have not got women with sufficient pressure to bear, you will still go on spending a great deal more on the boys than on the girls. In the first place, that is one of the things that has to be seen to. Also, I would say this: The women of all classes who are taking any active interest in welfare are pressing that there should be a larger proportion of finances spent on education. I think you could safely trust to the women of most classes to take that line at the present moment, but I should be very glad to see the franchise taken as near as possible, and that is why I do lay particular importance upon the literacy qualification. Any woman who is intelligent enough to be of any value to bring any pressure to bear at all, can make herself literate within a reasonable period, and if you have the literacy qualification, and any section of women feel strongly that the section of women which has the vote, is not taking the vote, they have the weapon in their hands, and it is for that reason that I have always been so strongly in favour of literacy, and it is for that reason that all the organised women of India are also in favour of literacy.

C73. I am satisfied, as long as you see my point of view. Sir Philip Hartog, I just want to ask you a question about literacy. We have really no information as to what the administrative difficulties are, as they are alleged to be, against adopting literacy as a test for the franchise in the case of women, but what I understand the difficulties to be are these: First of all, it is suggested that there are no certificates available which would enable a registration officer, off-hand, to satisfy himself that a woman falls within the category required under literacy, and, therefore, would in the position to be put on the roll off-hand. That being the case, we shall have to adopt the procedure suggested in the proposals, that a village officer should

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examine and his certificate should be countersigned by a tahsildar. I think the administrative difficulty that is suggested is this: How is a village officer to approach a woman in the village to find out whether she is literate or not? Would you make it depend upon the woman who wants to get her vote having to approach and make an application?—(Sir Philip Hartog.) I think that is the only possible way. She would have to have sufficient interest to say, either herself or through her husband: "I wish to be placed on the roll; I am literate and am willing to be tested."

Mr. Butler.

C74. How does that differ from application?—(Lady Layton.) I do not think we have objected to application on the part of literacy in our Memorandum. We do not object. We think that the people who are already recognised as literate in any educational qualification that is admitted should be put automatically on the roll. Beyond that, it must be a matter of application.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C75. So really this objection raised on the basis of inquiries made in households, which might be objectionable, would not arise?—Never. (Sir Philip Hartog.) May I just say, it seems to me to be an appropriate point to make reference to two answers of the Secretary of State bearing directly upon the point which has been raised by Dr. Ambedkar. In answer to Question 7437 the Secretary of State said: "In future, for future generations of girls or women, it will be a comparatively simple matter to adapt your educational registers and returns for electoral purposes, but in Provinces where that has not been done hitherto, there will be very considerable difficulty in doing it for the first election." Now, I should like to point out that if you read that with another answer of the Secretary of State, he says at page 817, Question 7214: "There will be no change for X years." In answer to the Marquess of Salisbury, he suggests that in the Act of Parliament he would say for X number of years there can be no alteration of the franchise. Consequently, it would be of little use to have a register for the second, third or fourth elections, if those second, third or fourth elections came within the period of X years. Let me take the question of

numbers. The total number of literate women is estimated in the Lothian Report to be a million and a quarter. It is on page 86 of that Report. Of those, 345,000 are in Madras, with regard to whom there is no difficulty. That leaves over for the rest of India the relatively small number of 875,000. Now, if it was possible to put 345,000 Madras women on the rolls for one election, and that must have been done at some time or another, why is it impossible to put 875,000 women on the rolls for the whole of the rest of India?

Mr. Butler.

C76. I think that question was answered somewhere in the course of the Secretary of State's evidence. First of all, the conditions are, I think, quite different, and, secondly, Madras has a register based on local Government returns, which makes it easier to adopt the qualification there. That is found in the answer of the Secretary of State?—I am aware of Question 7435; I have got marked on my copy those answers to which Mr. Butler refers. I know in 7435 the Secretary of State said he thought it would put an unbearable strain upon the administrative machinery, but unless one sees what the detailed objections are, one cannot answer detailed questions of that kind. From my experience in India, I am familiar with general statements of that kind, and am quite familiar with the way they break down under cross-examination, and still more in actual practice.

Mr. Cocks.

C77. Lady Layton, I understand, taking the Provincial franchise first, that under the proposals of the Franchise Committee, the Lothian Committee, they recommended a proportion of 1 to 5, or the result of their recommendation would be 1 to 5?—(Lady Layton.) Yes.

C78. Under the White Paper, I understand it is estimated that the proportion will be about 1 to 7. Do you think it will be as much as that?—I feel quite convinced still more by the Secretary of States evidence out of his own mouth that it certainly will not be 1 in 7, but more like 1 in 16 or 1 in 20. It was for that reason I made that statement at the outset of my speech to-day, because it was quite clear from the Secretary of State's evidence that there were two administrative difficulties in mind when

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the application was put in; one was the administrative difficulty of finding out the names of the wives; and the second was the administrative difficulty of having to poll so many women at the first election. Now, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say you are going to have 1 in 7 and at the same time say: "This is splendid; we shall be able to run this thing because we are really only going to have about 1 in 4 applying." It is for this reason that we think it is rather disingenuous to pretend 1 in 7 in one breath and at the same time to justify as your reason for doing it, that it will make it much easier to be nominated, because there will be less women going to the poll because they will not apply. We are quite convinced the second argument is right. If you take this country, we are quite sure if you left it to the women of this country at the first election to apply for their vote, you would have nothing like the proportion of 1 in 3 or 4 applying. In this country, without difficulties of purdah or getting to the polling booth, or going out and appearing before the public and taking part in public life, I am quite sure in India it is a conservative estimate to think that you are going to have 1 in 4. I, myself, would not be at all surprised if it was much less than 1 in 4. I think that after the first election, when things have warmed up, or when the organisations have got going, and the women have begun to realise that certain things were going to be discussed in the House which they were concerned with, the political parties will be able to bring that up, but at the first election I am sure that will not happen. The only party that would be able to get people to apply would be the Congress Party, because that is the most adequately organised political party, and they would actively work to persuade women to go and apply, but I do not think you will get the majority of women at this moment doing it, and that is why I think it is such an unfair thing to have done, in regard to women who, in any case, will find it difficult to go to the poll, with all the transport difficulties, distance and purdah, and so on—to add to their problems by giving less than this differential qualification of application. We do feel that most strongly.

C79. You want to abolish the condition of application?—We want to abolish the condition of application as regards

literacy. I am quite prepared to accept that; that is quite a different thing. We want to abolish the application for wives. For literacy, it would be natural for both men and women if you had a literacy qualification. It is only a suggestion that the literacy qualification should be for one or two elections, and until the period when it was possible to get more women to pass the ordinary educational standards and get in on the same footing as men. It is purely a temporary measure, the literacy qualification.

Miss *Pickford*.

C80. With regard to that, Lady Layton, when you say it is purely a temporary measure, are you referring to the qualification for the Federal Assembly only?—Yes.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C81. On the question of literacy, you think the qualification of matriculation, or something approaching that, is far too high, I imagine?—It would amount to something like 12,000 women voting, at the most.

C82. What do you think would be the effect upon the electorate of this country if matriculation were made a test? Do you think it would disfranchise a million electors?—Do you mean by itself?

C83. Yes, if that was the test?—It would disfranchise a tremendous number of people, but it would enfranchise a much larger proportion than in India, because the majority of children who do go through the secondary schools do go in for the matriculation standard.

C84. Even though England is a country which spends much more on education than India does, you would find it would disfranchise more than half the electorate?—It would disfranchise much more than that, because even in the schools where they get the very best material that is going up for scholarships, you have a very large proportion of girls and boys who are not generally taking the matriculation standard, and never get past the School Certificate.

C85. It might disqualify many Members of Parliament, I imagine?—It is quite possible.

C86. And Members of the House of Lords as well?—I have no doubt about the House of Lords.

C87. You think the test is simply the ability to read or write a letter, say?—I think that that should be the qualifi-

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cation during the next two elections during which period you are going to give the women the opportunity of pressing for educational opportunities and make it possible for them to reach, at any rate, a primary standard and to get some kind of actual qualification. At present it is quite impossible for women to get the other qualification because in enormous numbers of villages and even in some towns there are not the schools to do it. However much the woman may wish to do so it is quite impossible for her to pass certain tests, even the lower standard not quite as high as the matriculation. Literacy is the only test that can draw in many intelligent women in India, and I think you will be surprised to find the number of women who are taking a leading part in this country and India to-day who would be disqualified if the matriculation standard were adopted.

C88. You think it would be sufficient if a woman could read or write a letter?—That seems to me a fairly simple thing to judge—whether a person can read and write a certain letter.

C89. As far as franchise is concerned, you would really accept the proposals of the Lothian Committee?—Yes.

C90. As far as the Assembly is concerned, what do you suggest the proportion under the White Paper proposal would be of women to men?—The proportion at present would leave the women one to 20, practically the same as they are to-day, because the men's franchise is increased and the women's is increased—the actual numbers are increased—but the proportions are left the same, in spite of the fact that every committee and conference that has met has strongly emphasized the necessity of increasing the women's proportion in the Federal Assembly for the reason that in the long run it is the Federal Assembly that is going to legislate on these questions that concern women. On these big questions of child marriage and of increasing the general medical service for India, the administration of that kind of thing all over India must inevitably, in the long run, be finally decided in the Federal Assembly, together with questions of divorce and women's property. It is not very likely that Provincial Assemblies will take very definite decisions on questions of intestacy and so on. It is much more likely that it would be settled in the Federal Assembly, and that is why we think it is absolutely essential that

women should have a real voting strength there. Whatever may be said for the possibility that women in their own Provinces may be able to exert influence without having the vote, I am perfectly certain that will not be so with a thing so distinct as the Federal Assembly, unless they have the vote.

C91. I notice you give two alternatives for increasing the vote in that way. One is to add all voters on the Provincial Roll who pass a test of literacy. Another is to add the wife voters. Which of those two alternatives do you prefer?—Personally I prefer the literacy because I think it does give an opportunity to those women who are really keen and who are really interested and who really want to take an active interest in getting themselves enfranchised; and also one is quite certain it will enfranchise the women who now are in that position; but I think that the first important thing is that you should have a sufficient number to be able to influence what is going on.

C92. That answer depends on the literacy test being adopted for the Provincial franchise?—Yes. If you have one it is clearly obviously so easy to use it for the other.

C93. If it were administratively practicable for the Province it would be the same for the Federal Assembly?—You have the same roll clearly. I would like to stress what Sir Philip Hartog was saying, that, in spite of what Mr. Butler was saying, that it is much easier in Madras than in other Provinces (which, of course, I am quite willing to admit), if you think seriously you are only expecting to have 875,000 women over the whole of India spread over all the rest of the Provinces, the actual numbers which that means in any particular district, in any particular Province, cannot make it so administratively difficult. (Sir Philip Hartog.) It would delay your elections for three or four months; that is all. It is worth it. (Lady Layton.) The advantages so outweigh the difficulties (which we are willing to admit there may be) that they are worth the extra cost and labour involved at the outset, and once you have got it, the thing is done. What has distressed us most and what we feel most strongly about is that too much weight and importance seem to have been attached to these difficulties and not nearly enough attached to the fundamental importance of women

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being adequately represented. It is not as though you are just balancing two things which are of equal importance. One is vitally important to the whole future of the women of India.

Marquess of *Lothian*.] I think you have made the point very well. You must not get into a series of speeches.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C94. Can you give the estimated number of women who would be enfranchised under the White Paper and the estimated number who would be enfranchised under your proposals?—For the Provinces under the Franchise Committee's proposals there are 6,620,000 odd estimated. Under the White Paper you have that very difficult problem as to how many women you think are going to apply; whether out of the four million who could be enfranchised, three million will apply, or two million or one million, and that is entirely a question of judgment; but I have deduced from the Secretary of State's evidence that he only really expects something like one in four to apply rather than three in four, in which case you would reduce your four million to about one million wives. Add to that two million, roughly, property women voters, and that leaves you with three million as against six million.

C95. For the Assembly?—For the Assembly the important point is the proportions.

C96. I wanted to know the numbers?—The numbers of women under the Franchise Committee are 1½ million—1,578,151. Under the White Paper they are 300,000.

C97. Only 300,000. That is for the Government of all India?—Yes.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C98. Out of 165 million women?—That is out of about 63,000,000 adult women.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C99. For the Council of State you are asking for certain special seats. How many would you suggest?—We suggest one or two as a proportion, but we have not really made any definite proposals as to numbers.

C100. That is what you have in mind?—We have that in mind; but the main thing also is that they should be eligible in some way. We are not clear whether they are eligible. I was not clear from

the Chairman's remarks as to whether they are actually eligible under the present regulations.

Marquess of *Lothian*.] They are not eligible for the Council of State to-day, but they would be, I understand, under the White Paper for the Upper House.

Miss *Pickford*.] The Secretary of State's evidence gave that.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C101. When both the Houses are to have almost equal powers do you think the one or two that you are suggesting is a sufficient number?—I think that they should be in a position to be able to increase that number by their eligibility. I was only speaking really of the actual reserved places if it is decided that it should be done in that way.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C102. You know that the Governor-General has power to nominate ten members to the Council. Would it satisfy you if it were said that one of those must be a woman?—That would be better than nothing, but I am sure all Indian women themselves would far prefer to have some kind of electoral roll, as I have proposed, of the women in the different Provincial Councils, electing one or two or three members, than to have it done by nomination, because I think they would again feel that a woman who was elected would be more likely to be a freer woman and a spokeswoman of the right type than one who was nominated.

C103. In the last ten or fifteen years tremendous changes have been taking place in India. Do you not think one of the most remarkable of those changes has been the political awakening of Indian women?—I think it is quite one of the most remarkable. It has gone forward at a pace which nobody could have thought possible, and which I should think has no parallel anywhere in the world. It is quite extraordinary, and I think what we ought to remember is that the stimulus to-day has been the national feeling of taking part in a new self-governing community. That has been the main stimulus in the last few years. That is why I think it would be so very unfortunate if that is not recognised in the proposals of the Government.

C104. You know the Franchise Sub-committee of the Round Table Conference

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said that no system of Franchise can be considered satisfactory where such a great disparity exists between the two sexes, and the Prime Minister's letter said that a proportion of one-twentieth was not satisfactory or adequate. Bearing those two things in mind, do you think the present proposals of the White Paper are clearly throwing over both the Prime Minister's and the Round Table Conference's views?—We think they are entirely throwing them over, and we think the Secretary of State's evidence has shown that even more clearly than the White Paper itself.

Mr. Butler.

C105. Have you, in your consideration of literacy, considered the question of the overlap which is bound to take place between those who would be qualified for literacy and those who would be qualified for property, or a wife's qualification?—Yes, we have taken that into account, and I understand in all the figures that have been brought forward, the final figures as to total numbers, the Franchise Committee recognised and allowed for it, so that in the figures I have given, which I was asked for just now, that has been taken into consideration.

C106. Do not you think the overlap is likely to be very considerable and very hard to judge?—It may be, but that will settle itself quite simply when it happens. It will not give anybody a second vote. It will merely mean that nobody who has been enrolled as a wife would apply to be enrolled as a literate, or vice versa. When once you were enrolled you would be enrolled.

C107. When you take it that there are 875,000 women literates in India, excluding those who would be qualified in Madras, and when you consider the question of overlap, I think you will agree that the actual numbers would be very small?—Yes, at the present moment I think that is probably true, but I do think my answer to Dr. Ambedkar is very important in this respect. (Sir Philip Hartog.) This point is referred to on page 187 of the Lothian Report.

C108. I was referring to the numbers we were quoting this morning?—They come from the preceding page.

Mr. Butler.] Thank you very much. Do you realise that the actual gross figure of the women's voting figures as included in the White Paper is 4.8 in their ratio to men, and do you realise that in putting in a ratio of one to seven

we have made elaborate allowance for overlapping, and so forth, and that really the gross figure is of a very satisfactory nature and comes within the 5 per cent. which you yourself advocate?

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C109. And also application for registration?—I realise you have made allowance for the overlapping, but I also realise you have not made allowance for the number of people who will not be likely to apply under the wife's vote when they have to apply, because you specifically state the number of people you assume will apply, which is three-fourths, and it is after that that you make your allowance.

Major Cadogan.

C110. There is no means of estimating that at all, is there?—There is no means of estimating it, but the Secretary of State himself made it quite clear that the Councils were counting on the fact that there would be only a much smaller proportion than that applying, otherwise there would be no reason to put in the requirement about application, because the administrative advantages from the point of view of reducing the numbers of women would be gone. You cannot have it both ways. If you are not going to reduce the number of women why irritate them by making them apply? If you are going to reduce the number of women you cannot pretend that you are enfranchising them in the proportions of one to seven, because they will not be there. You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Butler.

C111. If Lady Layton will refer to the Secretary of State's answers she will appreciate some of the difficulties which have confronted us?—I can see a division of opinion in the Secretary of State's mind. I am sure he would be quite willing to enfranchise more women if he were not confronted with the difficulties which the Provincial Governments are putting to him, but I want to strengthen his hand by assuring him that he has to assure the Provincial Governments that the women of this country and the women of India are not going to put up with it, and he must realise that they are so strong that the Provincial Councils must get over their administrative difficulties.

C112. Is it not important that the ratio of men voters should be taken rather

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[Continued.]

than the ratio of men electors when you are actually taking the proportion of women who are likely to apply as against the proportion of men voters who actually go to the poll?—No, surely not. It is because the figures are not put clearly in the report. I am comparing the number of women that it is estimated are likely to apply (that is those that will be on the roll) to the number of men who are also on the roll. I am comparing the two sets of people on the roll.

Major *Cadogan*.

C113. Those who apply, and those who intend to vote?—It is quite true if you apply you probably mean to vote, but if you think of the conditions of Indian women to-day, or of any woman for that matter, it does not necessarily mean when the particular date comes for the election she will be able to vote. There are many things that prevent women voting. There are the practical difficulties of getting to the poll which must be much more great in India.

Mr. *Butler*.

C114. May I put it to you, when you are working out those rather large percentages which you have given us, which the Government cannot accept as being likely to be true, you should work out the proportion of actual men who go to the poll as against the actual proportion of the women who apply, and I hope your fears will not be justified by the actual ratio?—I do not think that would be a fair comparison, because, if so, you have also got to reduce the proportion of your women, who vote on the property qualification; that is your 2,000,000 has to be reduced by about 60 per cent. if you take the last elections, and your figures are completely different. I do not really think it is practicable to attempt to compare the proportion of men who did vote at the last election with the proportion that are likely to vote at an election in which India is, for the first time, responsible.

C115. I was not asking you to take the last. I was asking you to forecast the future, and to take the same standards for both men and women, that is all?—If you will make the men apply for their vote as property voters, I am quite prepared to do that—not otherwise.

C116. May I ask you one general question? Do you not accept that the White Paper proposals in respect of the number of women voters and the number of

seats reserved for women are a very great advance on anything hitherto?—In India?

C117. Yes?—Yes, certainly, they are an advance on anything hitherto.

Mr. *Davidson*.

C118. I have only got one or two questions to ask. I hope that my intervention earlier in the proceedings was not taken to mean that I am not in favour of every possible advance in the condition of women in the world at large, and especially in India; I think my political record would justify that. I should like to ask this question. Do you agree that in the production of proposals for franchise, they must, in a Constitution Act, apply equally to the whole of the country to which they apply? I mean by that the question of literacy. It is perfectly easy to argue, is it not, that in the south of India, where political advance and the absence of purdah and the use that the women have made of local elections, and so forth, if that were set as the standard for All-India, it might not work out practically?—Yes.

C119. In other words, one has to try and strike a mean which will enable the franchise proposals to work as a practical proposition?—Yes.

C120. Secondly, do you agree that some weight must be given to the evidence of those who have had the practical working of elections in India, and that their evidence must be of some value?—I agree that some consideration must be given to it. There is never any likelihood that consideration will not be given to it, because, clearly, they must play a very important part in any decision; but there is always a danger of the man who is running a thing close to it losing the wood for the trees, and that is the danger which I see has arisen with regard to this problem.

C121. Would you agree also with the proposition that it is impossible to obtain absolute perfection at the first election under any Constitution?—I agree, yes.

C122. We ought to aim at getting as near as we can to it?—Yes.

C123. You will also agree that political organisation in India is in its infancy?—Yes, but not such an infant as it was.

C124. And that a great many of the difficulties with regard to the possibility of the women exercising the votes that are given to them may be remedied by the more intensive political organisation of the women in the future, even as

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[Continued.]

regards its effect on the application of women for the vote?—I agree, but I should like to qualify that with this remark: If the women are put in such a very inferior position, they may not bother to put any pressure behind the application, but they may be, as Mrs. Strachey suggested, so bitter about it that they may do what appears to be unreasonable, and instead of educating their sisters to apply and to become literate, and to do all the things which we should like them to do, they may merely make themselves as unpleasant as they can and try and work up among the illiterate population, a population which is very easily swayed, a movement which may cause a great deal of trouble, and may prevent the administration from carrying out other things in a reasonable manner.

C125. But does Lady Layton think that where provision has been made for the enfranchisement of a large body, but not a large enough body, naturally, for those who wish a larger body—but assuming that provision is made for the enfranchisement of a large body of women and the reservation in the local Councils of actual seats for women, that the women's movement is likely to die in India?—(Mrs. Strachey.) May I answer that? This Committee must know very well that the Indian women do not like these reservations at all. What they want is adult franchise on an equal basis and no reservations. The only reason why they could be got to work happily with this proposal is if it gave them substantial numbers. If it does not give them substantial numbers, all their theoretical and genuine objections to special treatment and reservation will be revived, and I am perfectly convinced that you will find them in hot opposition to the whole thing unless this proposal is so adjusted as to give them substantial numbers and enable them to go into real political questions other than this beastly question of their own rights.

C126. Then your fear is that they will be driven to agitate outside the Constitution and not to work for the Constitution?—Certainly. (Lady Layton.) I entirely agree.

Miss Pickford.

C127. I do not think there is very much left for me to ask, but there are just one or two points I would like to bring out. Am I right in understanding that the main line of argument in your

introductory statement was that unless women in India, or in other countries, have a substantial proportion of the votes in the country, it is not worth while for candidates and members to pay particular attention to what may be called women's questions, and that the history of this country may be said to prove that?—Yes, that is quite so.

C128. And, not only do you anticipate that it will be the same in India, but that the history under the last 12 years of the Reforms goes to prove that?—Yes, that is so.

C129. That when the proportion of of women voters to men voters in India has been as 1 to 20, in such subjects as education, which Sir Philip Hartog has drawn attention to, women, or rather girls, then have a very small proportion of the funds available?—Yes, that is so; not only a very small proportion of the funds available, but a smaller proportion than they had before.

C130. And that would be true with regard to other social activities, such as, for instance, maternity and child welfare and general health services?—Yes; and might I say, we all know we are going through a difficult time economically, and India is not free from this difficulty.

C131. That is the point I wanted to come on to next, that it would be recognised that India, like other countries in the world, will not have so much money to spend on social and other services as she might wish to have, and that, therefore, the distribution of the funds available will be a matter of the first importance?—Yes.

C132. Do I take it then that your main line of argument is that it is of the first importance that women shall have a voting strength sufficient to make, not only candidates but also Legislatures, pay attention to their desires?—Yes, that is entirely my view; it is exactly what I have been trying to put forward.

C133. And that you lay more importance upon the volume of voting than upon the actual methods by which women shall be brought upon the electoral roll?—Yes, that is so.

C134. Do you also lay very great importance to the distribution of those votes fairly throughout the constituencies?—Yes, for the same reasons.

C135. Therefore, without wishing to support any particular method of bringing women upon the roll, does it appear

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[Continued.]

to you that what has been called the qualification of the wives of the property holders does, not only, bring on the largest number of women, but also in the fairest distribution?—In the present state of India, and having regard to the administrative difficulties, I think that is so.

C136. And, therefore, for that reason, you feel that the wives' qualification will bring pressure to bear on all constituencies, better than such a qualification as adult franchise for urban areas?—Yes, for the reason that only about 13 per cent. of the areas are urban and the rest are all rural districts, and, therefore, you will only have the representatives of that 13 per cent. feeling the pressure of the women's vote, whereas in all the rest of the constituencies, being rural districts, the members will be quite indifferent to what the women think.

C137. With regard to the question of bringing on the wives of some of the property owners, has the attention of your Committee been drawn to another proposal, that of enfranchising the widows of soldiers who served and fell in the War, the pensioned widows, and also the wives of men who, under the White Paper proposals, and the existing Constitution are enfranchised as ex-soldiers and officers?—Our attention has been drawn to that, and we shall be quite willing to support that.

C138. With regard to the literacy qualification to which you attach so great importance, you do realise that even if every literate woman applied, it would only bring on to the roll, not, I think, even allowing for overlapping, 1,250,000 women?—We do fully appreciate that, and for that reason, we have supported the wives' vote in addition, and we are most anxious to keep that. We should like the wives' vote to have been for the lower property qualification; we should have liked it for many reasons. One of the reasons Dr. Ambedkar put, namely, it does bring it to women of a different class; we should have liked to have had it happen, but, at the same time, though it is a small number, as I stressed before, we do feel it is very important that some qualification should be given which the Indian women themselves like. We think that is very important, and they do want the literacy qualification, and, I think that is a very important factor. (Sir Philip Hartog.) And it will increase.

C139. I was going to say that it has the further merit that it is an automatically increasing qualification without requiring any change in the franchise qualification?—Yes, administratively so, and it is one of the things which the Government of India would like for that reason.

C140. Is it a fact that under Provincial Autonomy the majority of the questions which affect women socially, what may be called, popularly, the nation-building services, will be matters for the Provincial Councils?—It is a fact that they will be matters for the Provincial Councils, but, as I said before, they are also matters for the Federal Centre, and a great many of them, undoubtedly, will be finally settled by the Federal Centre.

C141. But such questions as education, public health, and so on, are all Provincial matters?—Yes.

C142. And, therefore, it is, may I say, of the first importance to have a substantial women electorate for the Provincial Councils?—Yes, that is so.

C143. I think from what you have said that you recognise that under existing conditions in India, where special representation is a feature of the Constitution, it is important that special representation should also be given to women?—Yes. We have accepted that for the very reason that the situation is unique in India.

C144. It is not confined to special representation to women, but is an essential feature of the Constitution?—It is an essential feature of all the other parts of special representation which will be necessary. I should like to qualify that by saying that we fully sympathise with the Indian women's great dismay and dislike of the necessity of being, themselves, brought into the communal problem, because it has been a very particular feature, and we have great respect and admiration for the Indian women's organisations who have kept free from it, and that is why we do want, as far as possible, to meet their views, which are based on a good ground, that wherever possible they should have these general constituency electorates, so that they can, as soon as possible, break down this communal feeling; and I feel that the women will have a greater chance of doing that if there are a sufficient number of them and sufficiently strongly backed behind, both in the Provincial Assembly and the Federal Assembly, because they have had in their minds all

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[Continued.]

the time that these are all wide India problems; they are not communal problems.

C145. But on the general question, your Committee recognises that under a limited franchise, inevitably limited owing to the present state of development in India, it is necessary to consider together the question of franchise and representation. They cannot be considered in watertight compartments?—No, I entirely agree.

C146. Now just a final question on the special representation for the Federal Assembly. You have taken objection to the White Paper proposals for the special representation in the Lower House of the Federal Assembly. Have you taken into consideration this point, that women elected by the whole Provincial Council are indirectly representative of the Province, as a whole?—We have taken that into account, and I would say myself that when I first saw the proposal, I was quite prepared to accept it; only, on thinking it over and meeting the criticisms that the Indian women themselves put forward, did I realise that they were really just criticisms. I quite saw the advantage of a woman feeling that she was representing the whole Province; I think that is an advantage. On the other hand, there is this other point, that this is a temporary thing. We know it is a temporary thing. It is specifically stated that these reserved seats are only for two elections, and that you are not going to give the women the opportunity of representing and meeting a general constituency, if you elect them in that indirect method, and they will be in a different position in the Federal Assembly from all the other members, because all the other members are going to be directly elected to the Federal Assembly.

C147. But you realise the very formidable arguments that can be drawn against your proposals, that a woman who is elected either by a special constituency or by the capital city of the Province, is a representative in the Federal Assembly, not of her Province, but of one constituency alone?—I do realise that, but I think that does not outweigh the other. After all, all the representatives who are there from the Province, will be representing the whole Province; you will have quite enough representatives of the Province as such in the Federal Assembly. It is not as if the women who were there would have to bear the burden of all the questions

that cover the whole of the Federal Assembly, and, moreover, it is always possible for a woman to be elected as one of the other Members; there is nothing to prevent her being elected in the other capacity but it seemed to me that the reserved seats for the women at the moment in the Federal Assembly is for a particular purpose, in order that they may voice the women's questions and women's problems. It is a temporary position, and as such they are in a much stronger position than if they had been elected directly.

C148. I think your suggestion for a special seat, if any, in the Council of State, the Upper House, was that the woman or women who should go there would be elected by all the women representatives in the Provincial Councils?—Yes.

C149. Do you realise that very strong objections have been made in India to a special women's electorate, and that the electorate for those special women's seats is composed of both men and women?—Yes, I do realise that, and if any other alternative method of finding a means of electing one or more women for the Council of State could be found, we would be quite willing to accept it. I do not lay any particular stress upon that particular method. The Organisations have said that we want representation on the Council of State, and we are trying to think out how best that could be done. I realise that these other bodies have been elected in that way, the Anglo-Indians, Europeans, and so on, and it did seem a method by which women who had been already elected might be elected.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C150. May I put a supplementary question: Would you have any objection to one seat for women being reserved out of the quota of seats given to the major Provinces, four or five for the women for the Council of State, and these seats to be filled in by indirect method as it is going to be the case for the men?—No; I should have no objection to that.

Mr. *Isaac Foot*.

C151. We have on the Memorandum this very important list of societies. May we take it that the Memorandum is the considered representation of those several societies?—You may take it that this Memorandum has been circulated to all the societies, and has been considered by all the societies.

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[Continued.]

C152. Every one of them has had the opportunity of considering it?—Every one of them, and they are all represented on the Committee which decided the lines on which it was to be drawn up, and which saw it before it was circulated to the Committee.

C153. Broadly, the position is that you think theoretically the women of India

should be upon the same basis as the men, but that every exception should be proved by the necessity of the country's conditions, and should be as far as possible temporary. Is that broadly your view?—Yes.

Marquess of *Lothian*.] Thank you very much.

(The Witnesses are directed to withdraw.)

Ordered, That Sub-Committee C be adjourned to Saturday next, 10.30 a.m.

SUB-COMMITTEE C

1

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE SUB- COMMITTEE C OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Die Mercurii, 26^o Julii, 1933

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UNREVISED

JOINT COMMITTEE
ON INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

taken before Sub-Committee C
of the Joint Committee on

INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL
REFORM

Die Sabbati, 29^o Julii, 1933

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H.C. 112(II)

DIE SABBATI, 29° JULII, 1933.

Present:—

The MARQUESS of LINLITHGOW in the Chair.

Marquess of Lothian.
Mr. Butler.
Mr. Cocks.

Mr. Davidson.
Miss Pickford.

Delegates:—

Dr. Ambedkar.
Mr. Jayaker.

Begum Shah Nawaz.
Sir Hari Singh Gour.

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR and Mrs. HAMID ALI are called in, and examined as follows:—

Chairman.

C154. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Mrs. Hamid Ali, you are here on behalf of the All-India Women's Conference, the Women's Indian Association and the National Council of Women in India?—
(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Yes.

C155. You have been good enough to provide us with Memoranda marked 49 and 56, which you now hand in?—Yes, they are as follows:—

MEMORANDUM 49 ON THE STATUS OF INDIAN WOMEN IN THE PROPOSED NEW CONSTITUTION OF INDIA BY THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE AND THE WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

After a careful consideration of the proposals embodied in the White Paper with regard to the status and enfranchisement of women in the proposed new Constitution of India, we representatives of the All-India Women's Conference and the Women's Indian Association find that they fall far short of the demands made in our memorandum of August, 1931, presented to the second Round Table Conference.

We are still of opinion that only the proposals made in our first memorandum will confer upon women equal political status, but as they have not been accepted on the ground of their supposed impracticability, at the present moment, we feel obliged to make the following new proposals:—

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

1. We urge that the recognition of the principles of equality between the sexes

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should find a definite place in the declaration of the Fundamental Rights of citizenship in the Constitution Act.

2. We desire to point out that the word "Sex" has been omitted from page 29, para. 75, of the introduction to the proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform, as embodied in the White Paper, and it should be inserted.

FRANCHISE AND REPRESENTATION.

1. Though we feel strongly that Adult Franchise is the best method of enfranchising men and women on a basis of equality, we would accept as a temporary measure—until such time as universal Adult Suffrage can be introduced, and we earnestly hope it will not be long before it is introduced—the following system:—

(a) We recommend that for both men and women literacy (ability to read and write in any language) should be substituted for the higher educational qualifications proposed in the White Paper for voters in the elections for the Provincial Legislatures and for voters in the election for the Federal Legislatures.

(b) We accept the property qualifications as recommended in the White Paper for eligibility to vote in elections to the Provincial Councils and we strongly recommend that the property qualification for the provincial franchise be adopted for the Federal franchise, also.

(c) We strongly disapprove of the proposed special condition under which women may be enfranchised, namely, being the wife or widow of a person possessing the property qualifications at present entitling him to a vote for the Provincial Legislature, and we are of opinion that our rights as citizens should not depend on any extraneous factor like marriage. We would therefore recommend that in addition to (a) and (b), men and women of 21 years of age and over be enfranchised in all urban areas. The number thus enfranchised would be approximately fourteen millions odd, including those already enfranchised under (a) and (b) in the urban areas. These should vote both for the Provincial and the Federal Legislatures. The registration of voters should, we recommend, depend on the personal application of the claimant.

2. We strongly object to the election of women to the Federal Assembly from the Provincial Legislatures by the Indirect system as proposed in the White Paper (para. 4, Page 75, Appendix II).

3.—(a) We earnestly recommend that men and women should be equally eligible for membership of the Upper House. This should be clearly mentioned as the existing practice does not allow women to stand for the Upper Chamber of the Council of State.

(b) We recommend that property qualifications should be supplemented by educational qualifications for the membership of the Upper House.

4. In the matter of reservation of seats for women both in the Provincial and Federal Legislatures we adhere to our original demands and are strongly opposed to any such reservation.

ELECTORATES.

We are of opinion that a system of Franchise and Representation based upon Communal electorates and interests, as proposed in the White Paper, will be highly detrimental to the progress of the Indian people as a whole and to that of women in particular. We stand united in our demand for a system of joint electorates and in our protest against the communal award as it will introduce the poison of communalism into the now united ranks of the women of India.

ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

(Lady) Vidyagouri Ramanbhai Nilkanth,
(President).

(Dr.) Muthulaksami Reddi (Chairwoman).
A.I.W.C.
Hon Secretary, W.I.A.

(Rajkumari) Amritkour.
(Begum) Jahanara Shar Navaz.
(Mrs.) Hansa Mehta.
(Mrs.) Hilla Rustomji Faridonji.
(Mrs.) S. C. Mukerji.
(Mrs.) Renuka Ray.
(Mrs.) Malinibai B. Sukthankar.
(Mrs.) Aruna Asaf Ali.
(Rani) Lakshuibai Rajwade.

WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

(Mrs.) Shareefah Hamid Ali.
(Mrs.) G. L. David.
(Mrs.) Ammu Krishna Menen.
(Mrs.) Hirabai A. Vata.
(Mrs.) M. Hannen Angelo.

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[Continued.]

MEMORANDUM 56.

MEMORANDUM 56. SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF INDIAN WOMEN IN THE PROPOSED NEW CONSTITUTION OF INDIA SUBMITTED BY THE THREE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, THE WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN IN INDIA.

The All India Women's Conference.

Founded in 1925. This Organisation has Constituencies in every Province in India as well as in 12 Indian States. The total number of Constituencies with their sub-constituencies is at present 118.

The Women's Indian Association.

Founded in 1917. This Association has its headquarters in Madras with 24 centres and 72 branches distributed throughout India.

The National Council of Women in India.

Founded in 1925. This Organisation has six main centres in different Provinces, including Burma with six branches and 77 affiliated societies.

The ever-expanding membership, running into millions, of these three organisations is drawn from women of all races, communities, castes and creeds by reason of which their inner strength and all-India character enables them to voice truly the public opinion of the womanhood of India on matters of vital concern to women's interests in a manner that can in no sense be expressed by individual local women's societies or organisations.

We should like to point out, at the outset, that it is through the efforts of these All-India Women's Organisations that Indian women have been enfranchised.

"The Franchise Committee which visited India in 1919 expressed the view . . . that the social conditions of India made it premature to extend the franchise to Indian women at that juncture when so large a proportion of male electors required education in the responsible use of votes. If this advice had been followed, a beginning could not have been made until now, and the request that Indian women should have some direct opportunity of influencing the course of politics in the land to which they belong

would still have remained wholly unsatisfied. But the claim was pressed by the Women's Indian Association and its allies, and the Electoral Rules made under the Act were so drawn as to secure that if any provincial council passed a resolution in favour of removing the sex disqualification this should become an operative decision; and a corresponding facility was conferred upon both Houses of the Indian Legislature."

(Report of the Simon Commission.)

Remedial legislation is increasingly finding a place in the Statute Book of India in response to our insistent demands. We lay full claim to the passing of the Child Marriage Restraint Act as the direct result of our labours, and The Lady Irwin College in Delhi is a standing monument to our united efforts in the field of educational reform. In short, it is due very largely to our work and propaganda on behalf of the women of India that there exists in our country to-day in the minds of both men and women a real interest in and desire to give to woman her rightful place in the New Constitution.

In spite, however, of the acknowledged recognition of the just claims of India's women to full citizenship and equal opportunities for service by His Majesty's Government, the Prime Minister and the various Committees and Commissions that have of recent years visited India and in spite of our own united demands for the fulfilment of that recognition, we must confess to a sense of profound disappointment and dissatisfaction at the wholly inadequate proposals contained in the White Paper with regard to women's franchise and our status in the New Constitution.

We now wish to refer in more detail to our Memorandum II. on the Status of Indian women in the New Constitution of India.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

We strongly urge the necessity of the specific recognition of woman's inherent right to full citizenship and equal opportunities with men for public service to the country. Therefore, in the Declaration of Fundamental Rights, we wish it to be clearly stated that "sex" shall be no bar to any public employment, office, power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

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[Continued.]

FRANCHISE AND REPRESENTATION.

Although Adult Franchise has been publicly declared and accepted by British and Indian authorities as the desired goal we deplore the fact that the White Paper proposals for franchise have failed utterly to inspire us with the hope that we shall reach this goal within a reasonable period of time.

While we fully agree with the Indian Central Committee that Adult Franchise would be the best means of emancipating women—and it would seem impossible to do full justice to the claims of women and the poor millions of the country without universal suffrage—we emphasise once again that the alternative proposals embodied in our Memorandum II. are put forward by us only as a temporary measure until such time as our goal is attained.

Chiefly concerned and anxious as we women are to possess the means of furthering the cause of economic, educational, social and medical reform, we consider it essential that as large a number of women as possible should be brought immediately on to the electoral roll so that our voice may be a determining factor in influencing and shaping the policy of the Provincial and Central Governments in matters of such vital importance to the nation.

(a) We, therefore, strongly recommend the "literacy" qualification for the following reasons:—

(i) a much larger number of women will be enfranchised under this than under the higher educational qualification proposed in the White Paper. "Literacy" would give us 1,255,000 voters, whereas the Upper Primary Standard would only enfranchise 500,000.

(ii) a qualification of this nature will be an incentive to education amongst the illiterate classes.

(iii) it will bring in a larger percentage of voters for the Federal Legislatures which is essential in the interests of social progress and will, incidentally, minimise such administrative difficulties as must arise if the electoral roll for both Provincial and Federal Legislatures is not the same. The proposed increase in numbers for the electoral roll for the Federal Assembly is, in our opinion, fully justified if this body is to be a really representative one and, in this

matter, we are in entire agreement with the minority opinion of the members of the Lothian Committee.

"The chief factor is the area of constituencies and not the number of electors, and owing to the proposed increase of the size of the Assembly the area of every constituency will be much smaller than at present. Therefore, even if the numbers are increased as we propose, the task of candidates will be easier than it is at present. The argument of administrative convenience is more in favour of our proposal than that of the majority."

(Minute of Dissent. Report of the Indian Franchise Committee.)

Moreover, the problem of numbers has got to be faced sooner or later, and we are firmly convinced that a definite beginning on the right basis can be made at once. We are emphatic that the true spirit of reform, without which no national progress is possible, must in no wise be sacrificed at the altar of administrative inconveniences.

While on the subject of "literacy" as a qualification for the franchise, we confess to our utter inability to understand the logic underlying the recommendation in the White Paper for "literacy" in Madras only—educationally the most advanced Province in India—and higher educational qualifications for the other less advanced Provinces. Such a recommendation will eliminate from the electoral roll large numbers of women who are educated but will not be able to produce the required examination certificates. Indeed, a vast number of women, who are to-day taking a prominent part in our social and educational activities, will be debarred from taking their rightful place in the public life of the country.

(b) We recommend the same property qualifications for eligibility to vote in elections to both Provincial and Federal Legislatures inasmuch as these will give us 1,929,000 women on the rolls and for the same reason as given above in support of the "literacy" qualification.

(c) We disapprove strongly of the proposed enfranchisement of the wives and widows of persons possessing the property qualifications for the following reasons:—

(i) Such a proposal is a direct negation of the recognition of the

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woman's inherent right to citizenship. There is no reason whatsoever, in our opinion, why the women of India should not be enfranchised independently of any extraneous factor, and we would like to emphasise that on this point there exists a very strong feeling amongst the members of our Organisations who perceive that they, as women, are in themselves a vitally integral part of the body politic. The importance and value of the effect of this psychological factor on the minds of both men and women must, on no account, be ignored. We would here like to point out that our traditions and social conditions being wholly different from those of the women of the West the argument that in England, for example, the wife's vote proved useful is not necessarily applicable to us, having regard to the fact that we do not to-day possess those facilities for freedom and education which they possessed at the time of their enfranchisement on this basis.

(ii) We know full well that this proposal will only serve to double the vote of the landlords and capitalists—a section of the most conservative and orthodox members of society—who are, generally speaking, invariably opposed to all progressive reforms. The recent opposition from this section, who will constitute the majority of voters to the Councils and Federal Legislatures, to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, The Hindu Widows' Inheritance Rights Bill, The Raising of the Age of Consent Bill, The Removal of Untouchability Bill, is an unequivocal proof—if proof were needed—of the cogency of our argument against further strengthening the hands of a community which has always been unintelligibly conservative and reactionary in its outlook.

(iii) In so far as the 4,236,000 women sought to be enfranchised under this proposal will be scattered over the length and breadth of India—less than half a million in each of the 11 Provinces—it will be a matter of supreme difficulty for the educated womanhood of India to co-ordinate the woman's vote on right lines, and the numerical strength of this vote will, therefore, be a negligible quantity so far as

the furtherance of the very causes for which we are working is concerned. *We attach equal importance to the quality as well as to the quantity of the woman's vote.*

Hence it is that we urge with all the insistence at our command the adoption of our alternative proposal, viz.: adult franchise in urban areas* because:—

(i) We shall be placing forthwith on the electoral roll approximately between five and six million women—a number which, together with the women enfranchised under the literacy and property qualifications above mentioned, is the very minimum that will satisfy our present demands and needs.

(ii) Such a franchise will, we feel, ensure for us a more intelligent and, at the same time, a more independent and well organised vote—factors of the most vital moment to us at this juncture.

(iii) Difficulties in the matter of co-ordinating the woman's vote on a sound and workable basis will, without doubt, be minimised for the main women's organisations throughout the country.

(iv) The rural vote in India being so very much greater in numerical strength than the urban vote, adult suffrage in urban areas will not, in our opinion, disturb the ratio to any perceptible extent.

(v) The interests of Indian women in urban and rural areas being identical, it will be an incalculable asset to our Organisations and the cause of reform advocated by them to feel that the true welfare of dwellers in both areas is in the safer keeping to-day of a more enlightened and intelligent electorate.

(vi) Our proposal will certainly entail less difficulties as far as the Administration is concerned and, at the same time, relieve the latter in considerable measure of the expenditure involved in the recommendations proffered by the White Paper.

(vii) The increased vote in the urban areas will also help to return to the Councils and Federal Legislatures a larger number of women candidates, while men candidates returned on the strength of the

* *Vide* Report of The Indian Franchise Committee, p. 43, para. 95, for definition of urban areas.

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[Continued.]

woman's vote will, of necessity, interest themselves in matters concerning the welfare of women. It must be borne in mind that the majority of social reformers are residents of urban areas.

(viii) There will, if our proposal is accepted, be an increased enfranchisement on right lines of the humble masses who stand in urgent need of ameliorative reform and constitute the majority of India's population.

Our recommendation (3 (a) and (b), page 4 of our Memorandum) for a clear statement that women shall be equally eligible with men for the Upper House needs no amplification. We strongly urge that property qualifications for this Chamber should be supplemented by educational ones as, under the former, the number of eligible women will obviously be negligible.

ELECTORATES.

We have repeatedly urged that we do not desire the communal virus to enter into our united ranks. We, therefore, disapprove entirely and shall continue to resist to the uttermost the White Paper proposal (para. 4, page 75, Appendix II.) by which women will be elected to the Federal Assembly by an indirect system. We totally refuse to be made party pawns for the purposes of weightage for the convenience of any community—a state of affairs which will surely follow if this proposal is accepted. On the contrary, we desire direct election on an entirely non-communal basis. By merit and merit alone do we wish to find—and we are confident we shall find—our rightful place in the Councils and Federal Legislatures of our country.

It naturally follows that we are opposed to reservation of seats for ourselves and are whole-heartedly in favour of joint electorates—by which means alone, we are convinced, can India rise to her full stature.

C156. Do you desire at this stage to make a statement or to say anything in amplification of those Memoranda?—Yes. May I crave the indulgence of the Committee for a few remarks only, not to make a statement, but just to elucidate a few more points in connection with what we have said. If we consider it necessary to make a further statement, we should like to do so before the full Joint Select Committee, if we may. First of all, I think, owing to some misunder-

standing on the part of the National Council of Women in India, their second Memorandum, which has now been numbered 56A, has not been sent to the Committee. Am I right? Memorandum No. 56A which goes under the signature of the Women's Indian Association and the All-India Women's Conference, does not include the National Council of Women in India. May I hand that in?

C157. Thank you?—It is as follows:—

MEMORANDUM 56A. ON THE STATUS OF INDIAN WOMEN IN THE PROPOSED NEW CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.

After a careful consideration of the proposals embodied in the White Paper with regard to the Status and enfranchisement of Women in the proposed new Constitution of India we, the representatives of the National Council of Women in India, find that they fall short of the demands made in our Original Memorandum of August 1931, which was presented to the 2nd Round Table Conference.

1. We still adhere to the demands made therein but as they have been turned down on the ground of their supposed impracticability at the present time, we feel obliged to make the following new proposals.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

2. We urge that the recognition of the principle of equality between the sexes should find a definite place in the declaration of the "Fundamental Rights" of Citizenship in the Constitution Act.

3. We desire to point out that the word sex has been omitted from page 29, para. 75 of the Introduction to the proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform, as embodied in the White Paper.

4. We earnestly recommend that both men and women should be equally eligible for membership of the Upper House. This should be clearly mentioned as the practice as it exists to-day does not allow women to stand for the Upper Chamber.

5. We recommend that property qualifications should be supplemented by educational qualifications for membership of the Upper House.

6. In the matter of Reservation of seats for women both in the Provincial and Federal Legislatures we adhere to our original demand and are strongly opposed to any such reservation.

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[Continued.]

7. We strongly object to the election of women to the Federal Assembly from the Provincial Legislatures, by the indirect system as proposed in the White Paper (Page 75, Appendix II, para. 4.).

FRANCHISE.

8. Though we feel strongly that Adult Franchise is the best method of enfranchising men and women on a basis of equality, we would accept as a temporary measure—and we earnestly hope it will not be long before it is introduced—the following system.

9. (a) We recommend that for both men and women literacy (ability to read and write in any language) should be substituted for the higher educational qualifications proposed in the White Paper for voters in the elections for the Provincial Legislatures, and the upper primary standard for voters in the election for the Federal Legislatures.

(b) We accept the property qualifications as recommended in the White Paper for eligibility, to vote in elections to the Provincial and Federal Legislatures.

10. We strongly disapprove of the proposed special condition under which women may be enfranchised namely, being the wife or widow of a person possessing the property qualifications at present entitling to a vote for the Provincial Legislature as derogatory to our sense of equality, and we consider that our rights as citizens should not depend on marriage. We would therefore recommend that in addition to (a) and (b) men and women of 21 years of age and over, be enfranchised in all urban areas. The number thus enfranchised would be approximately fourteen millions including many of those already enfranchised under (a) and (b). We recommend that the registration of voters should depend on the personal application of the claimant.

ELECTORATES.

11. Being of opinion that a system of Franchise and representation, based upon Communal electorates and interests, as proposed in the White Paper, will be highly detrimental to the progress of the people of India as a whole, and to that of her women in particular, we stand united in our demand for a system of joint electorates and our protest against the communal award as it will introduce the poison of communalism into the now united ranks of the women of India.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN IN INDIA.

Members of the Franchise Committee.

Mrs. Tarabai M. Premchand.

Mrs. Sunderabai D. Sirur.

Mrs. Agnes F. McKenzie, M.A.

Mrs. Sultana Asaf Fyzee.

Mrs. Kusum Nagarkar, B.A.

Miss Ruby Navalkar, B.A.

Mrs. Gulbanu G. Docter, M.A.

Mrs. Krishabai Khadye, M.B.B.S.

Mrs. Saralabai Naik, M.A.

Miss Leah Jhirad.

I may say that that Memorandum differs not at all from the others, except in one or two details, but as they chose me as their representative, and their memorandum was printed before ours, I take full responsibility that they would subscribe to the views in our Memoranda.

C158. I quite understand?—I would also like to explain why it is called the second Memorandum. Our original Memorandum, the first one, was submitted at the Second Round Table Conference; that is why this Memorandum is called the second one; it is not that we have submitted two Memoranda to the Joint Select Committee. May I presume that our supplementary statement bearing upon this Memorandum which has been circulated, has had the careful consideration of the Members of the Joint Select Committee?

C159. You may?—Because, of course, we want to tender our evidence on the Memoranda proffered by us, as well as on the unfeasibility and undesirability of the proposals contained in the White Paper concerning the womanhood of India. I would just like to say one or two things in order to elucidate further this point, because we are very grieved, indeed, that no effort has been made by those responsible for the White Paper to abolish the sex disqualification. If, as we have so often been told, the Government is really anxious that women should play their rightful part in the public life of India in the future Constitution, we are convinced that we do want a declaration, whether it be in a declaration of fundamental rights, if there is going to be one, or in the Instrument of Instruction, or in whatever manner that is selected finally, but we want that there should be a declaration to this effect, as appeared in our first Memorandum: Equal rights and obligations of all citizens without any bar on account of sex; no disability to attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, or creed or sex in regard

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to "public employment, office, power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling". We think that this is very essential, from the point of view of the women. I should like to explain the position of the three organisations which we have the honour to represent. We have throughout stood for adult franchise or any system based thereon, and we gave evidence to this effect before the Indian Franchise Committee. We suggested the grouping system, and we say that we still adhere to our opinion that because adult franchise is the goal which has been universally recognised as the ultimate desideratum, we are not convinced that it is possible to bring women in on any basis of equality with men without adult franchise or any system based thereon; and we are not convinced after all the objections that have been raised that it is either administratively impracticable or financially impossible; but because it has been turned down, I suppose we dare not ask for a re-consideration of these views; therefore, we have put forward alternative proposals in our Memorandum which is now under consideration. We have paid attention to, I might say, five points in framing our proposals. First of all, in the very limited franchise that India is to have under the new Constitution, we want to bring as many women as possible on the electoral rolls, but though we concentrate and though we do lay an enormous importance on the numbers enfranchised, we also lay equal importance on the quality of the vote, because we want the Women's Vote to be one that is going to carry real weight, and we want the Committee, please, to have an impartial mind when they are considering our objections to the enfranchisement of women on the wives and widows qualification, and our strong advocacy of adult franchise in urban areas. The third point that we have kept in mind is that we have tried to make as few differential qualifications between men and women in our proposals, as possible. Fourthly, administrative difficulties which, alas, have always put forward where any progressive legislation, as far as women are concerned, have also been kept in view by us, and I think that our proposals do simplify administrative difficulties, and also will relieve the financial burden, if they are accepted. Then, last but not least, the Committee must be fully aware of the united stand that the women of India have taken against communal and

separate electorates, and also against the reservation of seats which must, in the very nature of the proposals embodied in the White Paper be on a communal bases. The Secretary of State in reply to a question by Miss Pickford on the 21st July, I think I am right in saying, definitely said, regarding reserved seats for women: "The communal question, of course, as she knows, does enter into the question of these women's seats very definitely." We wonder whether the full implication of this answer has been realised by the Members of the Committee as it is realised by us. May I give just one example? In practice, it will mean that every woman will have to enter the Councils or the Assembly on a communal ticket. It follows that she will have necessarily to be loyal to that community, and in the event of any controversy arising as regards any remedial legislation proposed for any particular community, the women of the other communities in the Councils or in the Legislatures, as the case may be, will be morally debarred from giving their full support, or otherwise, in matters that are going to concern, and are of vital importance to, the entire womanhood of India. I think that this is an extremely important point for the Committee to consider. Of course, I need hardly add that we shall not on this basis have the opportunity of returning the women of our choice to either the Councils or the Assembly. We women are, therefore, determined not to let this spirit of separation which is so highly detrimental to our national interests and to our personal interests, to enter into our ranks. When the Secretary of State implies—I am afraid I have not got the exact words—but certainly the implication was that the communal award was forced upon His Majesty's Government by all the communities in India, we would have him remember and the Committee remember that 47 per cent. of the population of India were never a party to it, and will never accept it. We feel extremely strongly on this point. Surely, it is not fair, and it is against all canons of justice—(I am sorry the Lord Chancellor is not here)—to push us into a Room against our will, and tell us that the door is locked; we shall not take it as being locked. Now, as far as the proposals contained in the White Paper are concerned, I would just briefly say that they meet, in the

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main, with our unqualified disapproval. There is no uniformity in these proposals; they vary from Province to Province, as, for example, in the case of the reservation of seats, certain Provinces have been omitted altogether, though we are against the reservation, as I have said; as also in the differential educational qualifications, they also vary from Province to Province. The wives and widows of those holding the educational qualification might also raise and, I think, very legitimately, a hue and cry as to why they have been ignored and preference given to the wives and widows of those who hold the property qualification. The Upper House holds no opening—at least it is not definitely stated whether it holds any opening—for women at all, to say nothing of the monstrous suggestion that there should be indirect election for us to the main House of the Federal Assembly, where educational and economic reforms are going to come in, and that is where we women do want to have strength. As far as numbers are concerned, you cannot blame us for being exceedingly depressed when you realise that various Committees and Conferences which have dealt with India, instead of increasing the number of women that should be enfranchised, have decreased the number. We seem to be going backwards. The Simon Commission actually recommended the ratio of men voters to women, in the proportion of 1 to 2. The Indian Franchise Committee brought it down to 1 to 4, and the White Paper has further decreased it now to 1 in 7, and I would please have you to remember that this 1 in 7 is on paper only, and with all the difficulties placed in the way of that vote, which we object to, wives and widows, is going to work out in practice at 1 in 15, and probably in Provincial Councils at 1 in 20 or even less for the Federal Council. It seems almost as if they are ostensibly given with one hand and taken away with the other.

Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.

C160. May I say a few words? I fully endorse what the Rajkumari has said and all particulars. I should like to tell you something about the Women's Associations which we women have the honour to represent. I wonder if it is realised by Members of the Committee that it is for the very first time in the history of India that women elected accredited representatives of the women,

representing the women of India, have ever come before a Committee of the British Parliament. We understand and realise fully the responsibility that has been laid on our shoulders, and we hope that by the unity that we are going to prove to you, and by our breadth of vision and the potency of our arguments, we shall conquer those of you who do not believe in the arguments that we are putting forward and vanquish our opponents. Now may I tell you what is the nature of the Associations which we have the honour to represent. There are three Associations who have joined together. We are elected by a Joint Committee of these three Associations, first of all, the All-India Women's Conference, founded in 1925. The organisation has constituencies in every Province in India, as well as in 12 Indian States. The total number of constituencies with their sub-constituencies is at present 18. The Women's Indian Association was founded in 1917. This Association has its Headquarters in Madras, with 24 Centres and 72 branches distributed throughout India. The National Council of Women in India was founded in 1925. This Organisation has 6 main Centres in different Provinces including Burma, and 6 branches and 77 affiliated Societies. If you want me to read out the names of all the constituencies, I shall do so.

C161. I hardly think it necessary?—Then I shall read out the names of the few constituencies which have a bearing on the subject on which I am going to speak. We, the representatives of the Indian Associations have got this Memorandum and we hear that there are other Memoranda sent from India which do not entirely agree with our views, but we still are of opinion that the Memoranda which have been sent to the Committee through us really represent the opinion of the Women all over India in spite of a few other sections of women who have brought in other Memoranda. We hear that a Memorandum has been sent from Madras and, perhaps, Bihar and Bengal. I would draw your attention to this fact, that in Madras there are 52 constituencies of the Women's Indian Association alone which have entirely accepted this Memorandum. In Bengal there are 6 branches of the All-India Women's Conference alone, apart from the affiliated Associations of the National Council of Women in India, and they have all agreed to our

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[Continued.]

Memorandum, so that we still continue to think, and I hope that I have proved to you that our Memorandum is really accepted by the women in the length and breadth of India, because our Associations and our constituencies are spread over the whole face of India.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C162. May I ask a question? This Memorandum represents the opinion of your Organisations, as such, and that the dissent by any member to any clause therein has not been attached to the Memorandum, but is recorded?—Certainly. I would like to point out that when this Memorandum was drafted by our Committee, the Committee which represented the three Associations, it was sent round for affirmation to all our sub-constituencies. Of course, there are a few dissentients, individual dissentients, even on the Committee, but on minor matters, and that has been recorded on the Minute but we could not naturally record the dissentients in the Memorandum. Now, about adult Urban Suffrage: We would like to have this adult urban suffrage and we should entirely do away with the wives' and widows' votes as has been suggested in the White Paper. We know that the great argument against adult urban suffrage is: Why do you women want to get more votes for urban women than for rural women? And they say that it would be very unfair to the rural women if the adult urban suffrage was granted according to our wishes. Adult Urban Suffrage means suffrage in urban areas. May I read out to you what that urban area really means; then I think it will be quite clear that it is in the hands of the Committee to delimit an urban area in such a manner that they can either give the majority of votes to rural areas or to urban areas which comprise that unit which is known as the Municipal Unit or a notified area unit, or a cantonment area unit. I speak from experience because most of my life I have lived in these so-called urban areas which are governed by either municipalities or notified areas, and I know (I am speaking of the Bombay Presidency in particular) that excepting for perhaps a few large towns like Bombay, Hyderabad, Sholapur, and so on, which have very large populations, all other urban areas do comprise villages which have been taken into the urban area, simply to bring the population basis up to 5,000

or more. Only on that condition can they get a municipality. I will not ask you to accept my definition of the urban area, but the definition of the Indian Franchise Committee. "For the purpose of these comparisons, we have taken as the urban population the areas classed as urban during the census; that is, all municipalities, cantonments, and other towns with over 5,000 inhabitants which, though they have not attained self-government, still possess urban characteristics differentiating them from the larger class of purely agricultural villages. The actual influence which the urban vote may have on rural areas depends largely on the extent to which urban areas are included in rural constituencies, and it is not possible to indicate at this stage what the proportion of the purely urban vote in mixed constituencies will be." Then there is something which I will leave out. "The question of the relative representation of town and country in the Legislatures will depend upon the manner in which constituencies are delimited and at the delimitation stage one of the most important matters to be taken into consideration will be the desirability of making the representation of town and country in the legislatures proportionate to the population in each. The matter will also come up for consideration in mixed constituencies consisting partly of urban and partly of rural areas. In Bombay, for example, it would be advisable, other things being equal, to arrange constituencies so that urban areas will not have a preponderating influence in mixed constituencies; while in Madras on the other hand, where the rural voting strength is the greater, it may be found desirable to give some weightage to urban areas in the distribution of seats."

Miss *Pickford*.

C163. That is paragraph 95, page 45 of the Indian Franchise Committee's Report, is it not?—(*Rajkumari Amrit Kaur*.) Yes. (*Mrs. Hamid Ali*.) From this you will see that it is entirely in the hands of either the Provincial Government or for anyone who makes the units, or who defines the units, to give the rural women as many votes as they would want to because in some of the Provinces you will notice that the urban ratio is larger than, or almost equal to, the rural ratio, and in some much

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smaller. It can be adjusted according to the needs of the moment. We are not at all in favour of giving the urban women a larger vote than necessary, but we do think that at the present time, especially for the first two or three elections, the urban woman is the woman who is more educated than the rural woman, and the urban woman will be able to educate the rural woman in a far better degree, and lead her to vote in the right way, as we think, for our social legislation than if you give the rural woman a vote only, and no urban women get it. For instance, if you give the vote to the wives and widows, then practically all the voting will be distributed in the rural area, and it will be so distributed (50,000 I think in each province) that it will be very difficult for any organisation to reach those votes individually. We are also afraid that those votes will not be a help to us, but they will strengthen the hands of those members of the Assembly and Councils who have already shown their Conservatism by not wanting to have the Sardar Act and other legislation. So we do want that the literate woman and the more educated woman should be able to influence and to get at the rural women's votes. If you accept our proposition I think it will act in fairness to everyone all round. It will also be a step towards Adult Franchise which is our ultimate goal. We really cannot understand why the wives and widows' votes have been suggested in the White Paper, and the widows and wives of propertied men only. As the Rajkumari said why not of educated men? I say why did not you suggest it of, say, the Civil Service, then you could have put another steel band round your steel frame; or why not the wives of the policemen; then we could have had the policemen's wives being put into the Reserved Department as well. There are so many other things that one could have done, but this opportunity has been neglected, and only the wives of propertied men have got this distinction of getting a vote which they do not get as human beings, but because they are the property of some man. We are entirely against it. We feel it very bitterly, and we feel that it is against the dignity of womanhood and humanity to suggest a vote like that. It begins from the very first on a wrong basis, and if we once accept it we shall find it very difficult to come back to our principles again, so we do hope that our suggestions will be

considered and the urban vote and Urban Suffrage will be carried out. May I also just point out to you that there are only 30 large cities all over India, according to the Minute of Dissent by the three gentlemen, S. B. Tambe, C. Y. Chintamani, and R. R. Bakhale, which would really come in if the Franchise was only granted to them; then that would be purely urban vote; but if this definition of the urban area is taken and acted upon, then the vote for the rural women will be equal—or you can give more, if you will, to the urban women. Now we come to the question of the Communal Award. This is another matter on which the Women's Associations feel very deeply. We are feeling aggrieved and hurt that no account is taken of half the population of India when such a far-reaching award is made. If we accept this award what will be the result? Rajkumari will go into the Council through the Indian Christian door, Begum Shah Nawaz and I shall go into the Legislative Assemblies through the Muslim door. The Muslims' and the Hindius' and the Christians' parties will not allow each other to vote or to interfere in any legislation which bears either on the Sheriat or Shastras, or, if it is a Christian question, of course, the Bible. Supposing we want to do away with polygamy in India, we three women would not be able to join together, or supposing the matter of divorce comes up, or of inheritance, then we know very well the practice of the Assembly. They make a pact between each other and say, This question is entirely for Muslims or Hindus, hands off, so the Government must refrain from voting. They work it so that it will be desirable that the Government members will refrain from voting because this is either a Muslim, or Hindu, or Christian, or some other question. We do not want it to work in that way. We think it is a loathsome way to work in small compartments and to cut our country into bits. It will not lead to nationhood, nor do we think it conforms to our idea of patriotism to go into small compartments like this, so we must make it clear to you that whatever happens even if this Award is continued, women like me—and I speak for a very large number of women who are working in our associations—will entirely keep out of all political matters, and we shall see to it that we try to get this Communal Award changed as quickly as possible.

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Chairman.] There are just one or two questions I should like to ask you, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. I should like you to tell us a little about the political organizations which you represent. Which of these two organizations do you regard as the more democratic?—*(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.)* The All-India Women's Conference.

C164. That is the more democratic organization?—I think so, and perhaps I may be allowed to give you, as briefly as possible, an explanation of the Constitution.

C165. Might I put my questions to you and then you will see whether we are both moving in the same direction?—Yes.

C166. I should like to know a little about the organization. Let us take that one?—May I take the organization of the All-India Women's Conference?

C167. May I put it in the form of a series of questions to you because I know precisely that which I desire to discover, if I can?—Yes.

C168. Can you give us any indication now as to whether those organizations embrace all classes of the population? Naturally, in these matters interest tends to show itself first in the better educated and more well-to-do, but I am anxious to discover how the development of these organizations is proceeding?—Very definitely, yes. It embraces every woman in India, from whatever class or whatever creed, or whatever position in life she comes from. May I briefly tell you the Constitution of the All-India Women's Conference?

C169. I am not really so much concerned with the constitution; I am prepared to take from you at once that that is democratic?—Yes.

C170. What I am very anxious to discover, if I can, is as to how far the actual membership is democratic?—We have not got an actual membership in the nature of members paying fees for the very reason that we wanted to embrace all—even the very, very poor—and you know that for them it is almost impossible to pay fees, however small an amount we fix those fees at; but, for instance, when it comes to the election of our Delegates to the Annual Session those Delegates from every constituency are elected. We hold large annual meetings in our constituencies and sub-constituencies. They are open to women from every part of that particular constituency and when the election of Delegates takes place every

woman present at that meeting has a vote. When it comes to framing any resolutions (and for the last three years we might say that the question of franchise has been very much to the forefront amongst our constituencies) every woman present at those meetings has a vote, and I may say that those meetings are attended by hundreds of women, illiterate as well as literate, and they all vote, either in favour of or against and they are at full liberty to speak.

C171. Would you tell us whether the organization is doing any direct political education in the way of house-to-house visiting and attempting to interest women not yet interested in politics in such matters? Is any work of that kind being done?—Our Conference is pledged not to take part in Party politics, but we certainly do go round to women and as far as possible our Standing Committee members go into the villages and also get into touch with the villagers to put such matters as we think matter very definitely to the women in the new Constitution for India before them, and I may say we have an extremely lively interest taken in all matters pertaining to women.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C172. May I put one supplementary question? Could you tell us something about the representative character of the meeting that was held in Bombay at the end of March which framed this Memorandum?—Yes. At the end of March, when we were definitely told that adult franchise or any system based thereon was impossible, these three organizations elected ten women from amongst themselves—ten each—to meet in Bombay, and these organizations gave these ten delegates full powers to frame a Memorandum and alternative proposals, and if we had wanted—if these ten delegates from each of these Conferences had wanted—to publish a Memorandum ourselves, we should have had the entire support of our Associations; but feeling as we do that we wanted not only to frame it ourselves (even although we had plenary powers) but that we should circulate it, we circulated it amongst all our constituencies and we have got the unqualified approval of all the branches from all over the country of all these three organizations, so that the Memorandum does really speak not only for those who actually were responsible for the framing of it, but for the constituencies as a whole.

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C173. Is any work being done in the villages remote from urban centres, by way of attempting to interest women in political matters and political development?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) May I answer this question?

C174. If you please?—There are three Associations, you will remember: The All-India Women's Conference is pledged not to take up political work; but the object of the Women's Indian Association is "to secure the abolition of child marriage and other social evils; to secure for women the vote for municipal and legislative councils on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men; to secure adequate representation of women on municipalities, Taluk and local boards, legislative councils and assemblies; to secure for women the right to vote and to be elected for the Council of State; to establish equality of rights and opportunities between men and women; to help women to realize that the future of India lies largely in their hands, for as wives and mothers they have the task of training, guiding and forming the character of the future rulers of India; to band women into groups for the purpose of self-development in education and for the definite service of others." Except one or two items in those which are purely political, the All-India Women's Conference sub-constituencies and the affiliated constituencies of the Indian Women's Association do definite work in villages. We go about from village to village holding meetings in large villages and collect women from several neighbouring villages. We do medical work as well as school work; we start classes, and we have men or women coming down to speak on various question of legislation such as doing away with the disabilities of inheritance laws, or widows, or divorce laws or the rights of widows and so on. Mr. Jayaker will know that he himself has been asked to address several meetings of this kind so that we do educative work as well as propaganda work in the villages.

Chairman.

C175. Now, Rajkumari, do you meet, as representing Women's Organisations, with much opposition in India from Indians?—We do from the orthodox section of India undoubtedly, or from what I might call the unintelligibly conservative section of India.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C176. Have not you had many of these ladies presiding at some of your provincial conferences belonging to the orthodox section?—May I say that we have no opposition from our women—no.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C177. Orthodox men do not oppose?—So far as the women's work is concerned, we have no opposition from the women, but we do have opposition in India from our men.

Chairman.

C178. Does that opposition take a very active form? Can you tell us anything about it?—Yes, undoubtedly. For instance, to take the Child Marriage Restraint Act; we would not have been able to pass it without the help of the Government.

C179. That is opposition policy which you favour. Can you say that there is any opposition to your organisation or to you in your endeavour to interest women in the franchise? Is there any counter-propaganda, let me put it that way?—No.

C180. I am only seeking information—I do not know?—I cannot say that there has been any counter-propaganda.

Mr. J. C. C. Davidson.

C181. There is nothing equivalent to what we had in this country—the anti-suffrage organisation?—No; certainly not. We have had no difficulty from our men as far as obtaining the vote is concerned. The opposition we meet with is when it comes to a question of remedial legislation; we get opposition from the orthodox and conservative section of the men in India.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C182. In the legislatures?—Yes.

Chairman.] I shall reserve any further questions until I hear what my colleagues may wish to ask you.

Miss Mary Pickford.

C183. Rajkumari, you said there was no definite membership for the All-India Women's Conference?—Yes.

C184. There is no what one might call subscribing membership?—That is so.

C185. So that it is not possible to estimate the numbers behind that movement?—The numbers are so large that it really is impossible to estimate them.

C186. Does the same apply to the two other allied associations, or is there a

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definite membership there?—I think the National Council of Women in India has a membership; I am not certain about the Women's Indian Association. Mrs. Hamid Ali can qualify that. (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) We co-operate with the other Societies. There is no fee. (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) I think there is a fee for actual members in the large towns, but there is no bar to women attending those meetings.

C187. You cannot tell me the membership of the National Council of Women—the numbers?—I am afraid I have not got that.

C188. Perhaps you could look that up and put it on the Note afterwards?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) The National Council of Women in India have not a very large membership because they usually work in large towns. I have a paper here:—There is the Bengal Presidency Council of Women, which has 32 affiliated societies and one branch at Dacca and 250 individual members. The Bihar and Orissa Council of women has 3 branches, 5 affiliated societies and 380 individual members. The Bombay Presidency Women's Council has 2 branches, 27 affiliated societies and 500 individual members. May I point out that all the women's societies and associations working in a large town, say, for instance, in Calcutta or Bombay, have one woman member to represent them, so that these affiliated societies as a whole come on their association. It is impossible really to calculate how many members each Council has, because they have affiliated all the clubs, and working societies, and women's associations, to work, in that special unit. Say, for instance, in Bombay, they might have 50 affiliated societies and all the members of those 50 affiliated societies are the members of the National Council of Women.

C189. The main object of the three associations was, first of all, educational work, and to that was added general social work affecting principally women and children and young persons?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) That is so.

C190. And two out of these three organisations in their foundation are precluded from taking part in political work?—Not political. We are pledged not to take part in party politics, but where it comes to political questions that affect the welfare of women and children, we are at full liberty to take part.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C191. Like the franchise?—For instance like the franchise; that is termed political. Anything may be termed political; even remedial legislation may be termed political, but we are not barred from taking part in that. It is only party politics because we embrace women, to whatever party they may belong politically.

Miss Mary Pickford.

C192. Is it not the case that that definition of political work has been differently interpreted in different branches, and that some of the branches felt that the question of franchise was bound to come up against party political questions?—I think I must make that position quite clear. It was not any constituency or sub-constituency; what I mean is it was no body of any standing within the conference that did object to this. One or two isolated members did put forward the plea that perhaps we should not take up the question of franchise because it was a political thing. Last year at our annual session, this question was definitely thrashed out in open conference, and it was the opinion of everybody present that franchise came well within the realm of the work of the All-India Women's Conference. So far as the Women's Indian Association is concerned, they have, from the very beginning, taken up franchise. There is no bar to their taking it up, and I do not think the National Council of Women in India either have had any question as to whether they had a right to take it up or not.

C193. With regard to the question of franchise, I see you say in your supplementary statement that if women "are to possess the means of furthering the cause of economic, educational, social and medical reform" all of which are questions with which the Association are most intimately concerned?—Quite.

C194. "We consider it essential that as large a number of women as possible should be brought immediately on to the electoral roll so that our voice may be a determining factor." Therefore you stress the very great importance of having a franchise sufficiently large to bring pressure to bear not only upon the candidates who are standing for election, but also on the provincial councils of the legislative assembly?—Certainly.

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C195. You favour, I think, the qualification which was recommended by the Indian Franchise Committee for Women, that is, the literacy qualification interpreted as meaning the ability to read and write?—Yes.

C196. Even though that was suggested as a differential qualification, you would support that?—We have in our memorandum, of course, recommended literacy for men and women, because we have not wanted to differentiate between men and women as far as possible. But if the administrative difficulty of numbers is going to be in the way of this qualification, we would be willing to accept the literacy qualification for women only, and have it as a differential qualification. We are very sorry about it, but there seems to be no way out of having differential qualification once we go away from what I shall call the basic principle of adult suffrage.

C197. Would it be fair to say that in essence there is not really so great a difference because it is easier for boys to attend a public school and get the necessary educational qualifications, whereas many girls and women, equally well-educated, have not got these certificates because they have been educated privately?—Without doubt it would be impossible for us women to produce examination certificates.

C198. And, therefore, it is more differential in outward appearance than in essence?—Yes. We must admit that because we are willing to accept it.

C199. With regard to the other suggestion of the Indian Franchise Committee, and also of the Simon Commission, of enfranchising wives, and widows, who as wives have been qualified, of men who hold a certain property qualification, I understand that your Association takes somewhat strong objection to that suggestion?—That is so.

C200. I notice in your memorandum you say "the women of India should not be enfranchised independently of any extraneous factor"—that is a double negative, as a matter of fact—"the women of India should be enfranchised independently of any extraneous factor"?—Yes; it is a misprint. Our meaning is clear.

C201. Yes; it is only because I have not read the whole paragraph. Do you think that marriage would generally be considered in India as an extraneous factor?—I can only put it to you this way. India is, of course, a land of

universal marriage, but whenever we have held meetings, and these meetings have been very largely attended, and we have put to the women "Do you want the vote in your own right as women or would you be willing to accept it simply because you are married to a man who had the vote," the answer invariably has been "Why, because we are married, should not we have it in our own right; it is our birthright."

C202. Would it be fair to say, that the property, though held in the name of the man benefits the family as a whole, and that that is a strong argument for that property enfranchising both husband and wife?—In a country like India where women suffer under tremendous disabilities, where ownership of any property is concerned, I should certainly say that would not apply to the women of India. We are struggling to get our recognition of owning property in our own right.

C203. Another objection you take to this is that it would "double the vote of the landlords and capitalists—a section of the most conservative and orthodox members of society—who are, generally speaking, invariably opposed to all progressive reforms". You know, of course, that the suggestion is to enfranchise the wives and widows of those who are qualified to vote for the provincial council. Do you think the experience of the last 10 years would show that all those voters have been opposed to progressive reforms?—Of course, I can only speak generally, that it is, as a rule, the opposition from these property holders that we have to come against where any reforms are concerned.

C204. Are you distinguishing between property holders and others? I am speaking of those, all of whom are qualified to-day to speak for provincial councils?—Do you mean the ones who have the lower property qualifications? Do you include the lower property qualifications also—all property qualifications?

C205. I am including those who to-day are qualified to vote for provincial councils under the existing Constitution?—No; I cannot say that all have been opposed to reforms as far as we are concerned. I cannot say that.

C206. I think you said in answer to a previous question that even in the most orthodox, and, shall we say, ultra conservative section, although you had opposition to reforms in which you are interested from the men, you had never

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had any opposition from the women and, in fact, many of the women of this section of society are members of your organisations?—Yes. But I should like to qualify the position there. There is no doubt about it that if the women of those property holders who are conservative and are opposed to reforms are given the vote simply because they are married to these people, or are the widows of these people, there will be pressure brought to bear on them—there is no doubt about it—and though they are members of our organisations, and though they inwardly sympathise with us, it will be very difficult, or I may say impossible, for them to go against their husbands where the vote is concerned.

C207. That argument would apply whatever the franchise qualification might be?—No! because we have to take the psychological factor into consideration, and when a woman gets a vote in her own right, it is much easier for her to exercise it without any pressure from outside being brought to bear upon her.

Chairman.

C208. Is the suggestion that the secrecy of the Ballot would be of no avail in this regard?—I do not think so, because apart from anything else, if a husband were to say to his wife "I do not want you to vote", she does not go at all. It is impossible to get away from that.

Marquess of Lothian.

C209. How is that affected by the process by which she gets on the roll? She is on the roll and has a vote in her own right. How is that affected?—Supposing she is not allowed to go to the polling-booth.

C210. That applies equally whether she has a vote in her own right or by virtue of marriage?—No; because, as I say, you must take into account the psychological factor there. That does make a difference. It may affect—I dare say it will—I am not going to say it will not absolutely affect the vote where women are concerned, but it will make a difference to the strength of that vote.

Miss Mary Pickford.

C211. Is your suggestion that supposing the Franchise Committee's recommendations were adopted and a woman was qualified by literacy and she was also qualified as the wife of her husband, she would vote differently in one capacity from what she would in the other?—No; certainly not. I do not suggest that

for a moment, but we accept the literacy qualification because, as I say, it does not make any conditions where the vote is concerned for that woman, but the other qualification distinctly denies to women their rightful position in the Constitution. That is my point. After all, we have to take risks where women are concerned, and a great many of them will be influenced, as I dare say a great many in England are to-day influenced, by their husbands. I am not going to say that that will not obtain, but we want to eliminate all pressure that may be brought to bear on them as far as we possibly can.

C212. Your alternative suggestion is that of having adult franchise in urban areas. Of course, if you are going to avoid a differential qualification, that would necessitate enfranchising both men and women in urban areas?—Yes.

C213. You do realise, of course, that that question was very carefully considered by the Franchise Committee and was rejected on a variety of grounds?—But may I suggest here that with the lower property qualification that is now going to be applied to men and the suggestion that labour ought to have adult suffrage in urban areas, men will practically have adult suffrage in urban areas and the numbers are not going to be increased to an enormous extent, whereas, as far as we women are concerned, it is going to make a very great difference.

C214. Then it comes to the point that you are going to define the urban area. I understood from Mrs. Hamid Ali that you wished to define the urban area so as to bring in a large amount of country districts?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) May I say that it was not my definition. It was the definition of the Indian Franchise Association.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C215. It was a question of defining areas such as Local Councils, District Councils, and so on?—I said that I have lived in these areas. I am speaking from personal knowledge. For instance, when I lived in Nadi, which is known as an urban area, it had about 6,000 inhabitants, and 3,000 or 4,000 of those inhabitants came from the villages surrounding that urban district. It was only put together as a unit because they wanted to have a municipality there.

Miss Pickford.

C216. The point I want to put to you is this. It is recognised that only a cor-

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tain number of votes can be polled satisfactorily for administrative reasons. If you get beyond that machinery you break down. May I put it that was one of the arguments for not extending the vote, for not having adult franchise. It was suggested by the Minority Report of the Indian Franchise Committee that adult franchise should be introduced only in large cities where in a sense it was administratively possible. If you enfranchise all the adults in large cities; then your urban areas are, very strictly, large towns and the large towns only, but if you extend your definition of urban areas to take in country districts then it is impossible to tell at present what additional numbers will be placed on the roll by that suggestion?—(*Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.*) We have reckoned a population of 14 millions in urban areas. I think that figure is from the Indian Franchise Association. The adult population in the urban areas is 14 millions, and we imagine that the adult women would be a population of between 5 and 6 millions. If the wives' and widows' vote is not ruled out, and this substituted for it, the question of numbers causing the administrative machinery to break down would not arise, because it is practically only a little more than what is suggested was a fair qualification.

C217. It is fair to say these figures are purely hypothetical seeing that the constituencies have not entered into the question?—The question of numbers has to be fixed sooner or later in a country like India where, alas, the population is increasing by leaps and bounds. In ten years we have increased by another 25 millions, and we shall have a more difficult problem to solve, and we must make a beginning somewhere. I do not think that these administrative difficulties are going to be so great—"where there is a will there is a way." In the urban areas in particular, where we want adult suffrage for women, the women's organisations will be at the entire disposal of the Government, and we shall help in every way we can. I do not see that there will be that difficulty that is imagined. There will be far more difficulty from the administrative point of view in placing on the rolls the wives and widows. We shall have the most amazing difficulties placed before us as far as the wives and widows are concerned. In fact, *pari passu*, with the White Paper suggestion that these wives and widows should be enfranchised, statements have been made that, owing

to the difficulties which are being put in their way, very many less will come on to the rolls.

C218. Would not you agree that the essence of representative government is that it should represent all sections of society?—Certainly it should, and that is why we still adhere to the adult franchise and say that any system based thereon should be the best system. But when that has been ruled out and we are forced to go back, and when you are going to give the women a limited franchise, we insist that it should be given to us where it is going to carry weight. So far as our women's questions are concerned, I may tell you that any remedial legislation, any social legislation, any educational legislation, any economic legislation, that we women may fight for, is going to affect women in the rural areas far more than it is going to affect the women in the urban areas. So that, as long as we get that vote, it does not matter the way we get it, but let us get it where it will carry weight. With wives' and widows' votes it is going to be spread over the length and breadth of India. In the eleven Provinces there will probably be less than half a million. Of those half million presumably nothing like those numbers will come on to the rolls. So that the women's vote is going to convey nothing. Absolutely it is going to be negligible so far as we are concerned. Therefore, we demand that it be given to us, so long as it is going to be on the basis of a restricted franchise, in the area where it is going to count. All our social reformers are in urban areas. All our women organisations and women workers are there, and we are going to get a more intelligent vote, a more independent vote, a better organised vote, and surely that means a very great deal to our organisations and to us women at this time.

C219. Is not it a logical corollary of your standard that you get as large a representation as you can in the areas which support your views but you exclude those areas which you fear may be hostile to your views—is that quite representative?—It is going to be as representative as possible in the circumstances, because I hold that the women in the urban areas who are going to vote are voicing the sentiments not only of women. We do not divide ourselves, wherever we go, into urban and rural, but we voice the sentiments of women as a whole. I would impress on you that, wherever the vote comes from, it is not going to be a rural

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vote or an urban vote. It is going to be a vote for the women of India and for all that the women of India are working to-day to get.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C220. Would not the women in the rural areas oppose your suggestion?—I do not think they will. That is why we have suggested the literacy qualification also, because we feel that will embrace a fair number—we cannot say the mass. unfortunately, because the figures of illiteracy in education are so deplorable in India—but it will increase the number and give us a certain number of women in rural areas. As Mrs. Hamid Ali has pointed out, even in the urban constituencies we shall get a certain number of women on the roll. Our women who live in the urban areas have relations in the neighbouring villages, and they will have the vote. We are not going to have a great opposition from the women in the rural areas.

Miss Pickford.

C221. Is not it true to say that there are fewer schools in the rural areas and less opportunities for adult services such as maternity, child welfare and so forth? Would it not, therefore, be of very great importance that the women's vote should be brought to bear on candidates standing for rural areas?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) But the constituencies can be formed in such a way that a large number of rural areas can be taken into that constituency.

C222. Those would be only such parts as adjoin a town or an urban district, but in the remoter country districts the need is surely much greater?—May I point out to you that all the work that has been done so far for education and for medical relief amongst the rural women has been done by the urban women's Associations—either individually or through the Associations as a whole. That is just why we want our vote to be effective, because really if we go round India and see the state in which the rural women live to-day, without any medical aid, especially in matters of maternity or maternal homes or maternal aid of any kind, then you would feel as intensely as we feel that something must be done to remedy this evil. The only way we can get money from the Provincial Government or influence the Provincial Government is to make our votes count. That is just the thing we are fighting for.

C223. Therefore, you want to bring pressure on the candidates and members

of all the districts?—Of all the districts, and all the rural votes we want to capture.

C224. Yet you are opposed to a special reservation of seats for women?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur): Yes; if they are to be reserved, as we are told they are to be, on the communal basis, we are definitely opposed to that.

C225. On those grounds?—Yes, that is our objection throughout, because we realise they could not be reserved to us on any other basis, and, therefore, we object very strongly.

C226. You object to the suggestion of the election of the women members of the Federal Assembly by indirect election?—Yes, very strongly indeed. I do not understand why this differential qualification has been made between men and women. We are told in one breath that we do so want to make a differential qualification between men and women, and yet in this very important Assembly, where we want a strong vote and a strong representation of women, we are given an indirect vote without any chance of getting the right type of women and men; there is the communal difficulty.

C227. You realise that women will be elected by the whole Province?—When these Provinces are going to be hot-beds of communalism, I cannot see that the women who would be elected by these Provincial Councils will be representative.

C228. Have you any alternative suggestion?—Certainly. Why not direct election through joint electorates?

229. Direct election from what?—As far as the reservation of seats is concerned, we are opposed to the reservation of seats, so naturally we have not got any proposals for election to reserved seats, unless, I say, those reserved seats were definitely on a non-communal basis. We might then ask our organisations to consider the reservation of seats, but, as long as they are on a communal basis, we will not have anything to do with them.

C230. I do not understand your suggestion about direct election?—Well, there could be special constituencies, could not there, or one multiple constituency for the election of women through joint electorates to those reserved seats, if they are to be reserved?

C231. Direct election from special constituencies?—Yes.

C232. But the women would be representative of that constituency and not

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of the Province?—Well, it is a choice of evils. It depends on how many seats you have. We do not think we should have enough representation, but still we would have to compromise on that and take it from one of the capital cities of the Province, or in any way that the Committee thought the most representative women could go, but certainly it should be on a system of joint electorates.

Mr. Davidson.

C233. In your memorandum under the heading of "Franchise and Representation," you say: "We are emphatic that the true spirit of reform, without which no national progress is possible, must in no wise be sacrificed at the altar of administrative inconveniences." You will admit, I suppose, that a breakdown in the initial election after the constitution was in operation would have a very serious effect upon the future constitutional progress of India—I mean if the machinery broke down at the first election?—My answer to that is that every precaution must be taken, and even more money spent, at the beginning, because, after all, the difficulties are going to be for the first electoral roll. Every precaution should be taken that the administrative machinery does not break down. What we feel, and have always felt, is that the administrative inconveniences have been magnified to a very great extent, and that they will not really loom so large as they are supposed to loom.

Mr. Butler.

C234. There are one of two points that you have raised that I should like to refer to. You first refer to the actual paper figure in the White Paper of the relation between men and women voters?—Yes.

C235. Are you aware that the actual gross figure is 1 to 4.8?—I say that yesterday in the evidence that was given by the British Women's Organisations.

C236. And that in the case of the figure of 1 in 7 we are allowing for a considerable overlap?—I know, but from the White Paper proposals, I would also say that the education test you are putting for the women, and for the women only, is going to eliminate very many more women than you have really reckoned for. The figures will be very much nearer 1 in 25 or 1 in 20, as we have said. I do not think it is fair to count them as 1 in 7. I do not think

you have allowed enough for the overlap, as you call it.

Mr. Butler.

C237. 1 to 4.8 is the gross figure on paper and 1 in 7 is the net figure on paper. That is just allowing for the overlap of different qualifications without taking education into consideration.

Marquess of Lothian.

C238. May I ask Mr. Butler what he means exactly by overlap in the matter of qualification?—(Mr. Butler.) There are certain qualifications, property, wifehood and education. It is very likely that somebody who is qualified educationally will already be qualified with other qualifications.

Marquess of Lothian.

C239. You are not thinking of the people who might be put on and those who might not be put on?—(Mr. Butler.) No, I am thinking of the overlap of qualifications.

Marquess of Lothian.

C240. Then it would be 1 in 7—it is not possible to have 1 to 4.8?—(Mr. Butler.) No, it is almost impossible to calculate, but we were to count the overlap in the gross figure of 1 to 4.8.

C241. May I say, under the educational calculations recommended by the White Paper, you are not going to get as large a number of women as I think you thought, because we are not able to produce those educational qualifications. That is going to be a very serious drawback. As I say, the majority of our women would be eliminated from voting, so I do not agree to that 1 in 7.

C242. Have you considered some of the administrative difficulties which Sir Malcolm Hailey described in his evidence in taking the electoral Roll?—Yes, I have.

C243. Would you think it would be worth taking the risk of prejudicing the women's cause by coming up against such difficulties as he described?—Might I suggest that these difficulties could be overcome. Speaking for my own Province, if the women who are in the Educational Department, for instance, who are District Inspectoresses of Schools, if the women who are running the women's side of the Co-operative Societies, if the women who are working in the districts as lady health visitors, in addition to the women workers of our own organisations in the urban areas, were asked to help, I do not think these

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[Continued.]

difficulties which Sir Malcolm Hailey has put forward would arise. The Government could always appoint special women also to help them. I do not think that the women will have any difficulty whatever in going to the villages and eliciting the names for preparing the register and electoral rolls.

C244. Have you any statistics of the number of women available, in your suggestion, to cover the whole of the villages?—I could not give you an actual number. I know that in my Province, my own district of Jalunda, it comes in to the neighbouring district, and this lady, who is running the Co-operative side of the Women's Societies, would be able to do that part of the work for you in those areas.

C245. You are aware that we have had to prescribe a certain qualification for the men who were to do this work. Do you think that there will be sufficient women possessing such qualifications to do it?—I see no difficulty; I think there will be. I think that if an appeal is made to our Organisation and to the young girls of to-day who have just finished their university education or their school education, and who, perhaps, are looking out for jobs, they will be forthcoming. It is only, as I say, for the first electoral roll that it matters very much.

C246. That would actually be a lesser qualification than we are demanding for the men to do this work?—I do not think that would matter where women are concerned. We are told that the husbands will be willing to throw brick-bats about the place—that danger, at any rate, will be eliminated.

C247. Mrs. Ali said that the men in some of the urban areas were to get practically adult suffrage. Could you substantiate that?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) Yes, They would get adult suffrage, but they would overlap, as you call it, because in municipal areas there is already adult franchise for men. They come under the property votes, and taxation and Income Tax, and in various other ways—graduates, I do not remember all the details, but I know that it is so, that practically there is adult suffrage in urban areas for the men.

C248. Arising out of that, are you aware that on page 45 of the Franchise Committee Report, the highest percentage of the urban population is 22 per cent. and that in Madras 9 per cent. of the urban population was to be enfranchised?—But if you give the labour

classes adult franchise, then it will practically be adult franchise.

C249. If you turn to page 102 of the Franchise Committee Report, paragraph 250, where it refers to the establishment of special labour constituencies, in making your calculation, would you not agree that these constituencies have not yet been delimited, and further that this Report refers to the fact that some of the major provinces are all prepared to agree to the establishment of one or more constituencies of this nature. I think you will agree that that cannot be said to be the equivalent of adult franchise or anything near it?—What does it matter if a few more men are enfranchised, because you have already acknowledged that the Government is prepared with this administrative machinery to increase the number of men from 9,000,000 to 36,000,000. Is it not so?

C250. I was only concerned to correct what I thought was a misapprehension about adult suffrage for men, because I think it is a slight exaggeration?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Adult franchise in urban areas would not mean the same increase in the men's vote as it does in the women's vote. There will not really be a very substantial increase in the men's vote, whereas, it does make an enormous difference to the women's vote.

C251. I think that modification of the original is true?—Yes.

C252. There is only one other point. On page 4 of your first Memorandum, you refer to the Upper House, and you earnestly recommend that men and women should be equally eligible for membership of the Upper House. Is there anything in the White Paper which prevents men and women being equally eligible?—There is no mention of women at all. We should like it clearly defined. If we are wrong in assuming that women are equally eligible, of course, we withdraw that, but there is nothing in the White Paper to indicate that women are eligible. We would like a definite declaration upon that point.

C253. There is no positive assurance, but the fact is that there is nothing to stop them being eligible, nor is it intended in the White Paper?—I think we should like it made clear. (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) We know how it works in India when a thing is not definitely put down.

Mr. Cocks.

C254. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, in the first instance, you want the recognition

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of sex equality and fundamental rights?
—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Yes.

C255. The White Paper on that point says that His Majesty's Government is satisfied that "certain provisions of this kind, such, for instance, as the respect due to personal liberty and rights of property and the eligibility of all for public office, regardless of differences of caste, religion, etc., can appropriately, and should, find a place in the Constitution Act". I suppose you say that the question of sex is far too great a question to be covered by a little word like "etcetera"?—We would not object, if it were put in there, but we object that it has been deliberately left out, in spite of our repeated demands on this point. We would not object, if it had been put in there. As it had been omitted, we offered our own wording of the clause. As long as it is definitely understood that sex shall be no bar we are content. As we said: "sex shall be no bar in regard to any public employment, office, power or honour". As long as it is definitely understood we do not mind where it comes in, but we do object very very strongly to its omission.

C256. Do you suggest that it has been deliberately left out?—We have pressed this point for the last three years, and when the White Paper is framed, and it is left out, I do not know whether we are meant to understand it under the word "etcetera", but, if so, we would like it put in. I can come to no other conclusion except that it has been deliberately left out.

C257. Regarding the franchise, the test for literacy, you suggest is simple literacy?—Yes, ability to read and write.

C258. If the matriculation test were adopted, or anything like it, will that only enfranchise about 12,000 women in India, as was stated the other day?—I have not really got the figures before me, but I should be very much surprised if it enfranchise even 12,000 women.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C259. May we have a reply to that question also from Mrs. Ali?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) The fact is that most of the women in our organisations would have no vote at all. The Begum Shah Nawaz would be unenfranchised; so would I. I do not think the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur has any primary certificate. (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) I have not. (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) So that you need not

trouble yourselves at all about the question of women's franchise in this Committee.

Mr. Cocks.

C260. Such a test would amount to a farce?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Certainly, an unadulterated farce.

C261. I see that you accept the property qualification?—Yes, we have accepted it. It enfranchises, I think I am right in saying, about 2,000,000 women. We have accepted it on the same basis as it has been suggested for the men.

C262. But that would not enfranchise a very large number of women?—No, only about 2,000,000 altogether, I think.

C263. You object to the wife of a property holder having the vote?—Yes.

C264. Would you object to that, even if it meant that a good many women would be enfranchised, as a result of it?—We have put forward our other suggestion, in order to make up the disparity of numbers, the enfranchisement of women in urban areas, adult suffrage in urban areas. That makes up for the wives' and widows' vote, of numbers that it is sought to give us ostensibly on that qualification.

C265. You are assuming in your Memorandum that the adult suffrage is not at the moment practicable?—We have not assumed that it is not practicable.

C266. You are assuming that the majority of the Committee will possibly come to that conclusion?—I hope not. I hope we have been able to convince them that it is practicable and that it would be a very excellent method of enfranchising the women and giving us the requisite numbers.

C267. But assuming that adult suffrage is not accepted, would you still agree to disqualify the women on the grounds of marriage?—Our Organisations are not prepared to accept the wives' and widows' qualification.

C268. And you stand by that, even if it means disqualifying many women?—Yes, we have that mandate from our Organisations. We shall oppose it very strongly.

C269. Have you the Table that has been given in the Franchise Committee Report, on page 88, paragraph 217? There is a Table showing women with independent property qualifications, and women with husbands' property qualifications?—I should, of course, like to

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say that it would be a very sad thing if our proposal for adult suffrage is turned down, and we object to the wives' and widows' vote, that same other means cannot be found by the Committee in consonance with our principles and what we have throughout stood for, if some other means cannot be found in bringing that requisite number of women on to the electoral roll.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C270. You will have no objection to any other feasible qualification which would give the women the vote, being found by the Committee?—Certainly not. When they say: "We will not have this", it is not fair to say to us: "If you do not want this, you will have nothing." It is scarcely fair, as I say, to offer us half a loaf, and tell us at the same time that it is stale.

Mr. Cocks.

C271. Even a stale loaf is better than none at all?—I disagree.

C272. Referring to that paragraph, you will see the numbers stated there. Take the question of Madras. You see that although 700,000, roughly, would be given the vote of independent property qualification about 700,000, holding it as the result of the husbands' property qualification, would be disqualified, if that qualification were removed?—Yes, I see that, but I have said before that in order to make up the numbers, we have definitely made what we consider is a very practical suggestion.

C273. Do you think it is really humiliating to have a vote because you are married?—Well, that is the feeling of the women of India; I do speak for the women. We have put that to them very very often, and very very strongly. I, myself, speaking for my own constituency actually asked them to accept it, and they said, no, literate and illiterate. As I say, we cannot altogether disregard the psychological factor when we women are struggling under very many disabilities and we are anxious to get rid of those disabilities and, therefore, we have got to change the mentality not only of our men, but also of our women, as well as of the Government. Therefore, we want this recognition of our entity in the political body of India as women.

C274. But are you not getting that, if you get the vote through a literacy test on the same terms as men?—You are getting it on the same terms as men,

but we are not getting it, because we are married to the men.

C275. The literacy test alone gives you that right by itself, does it not, those who have got the vote merely because they are literate?—You mean, that we ought not to object. We are not getting it everywhere simply because we happen to be married, or widows of men who hold the vote?

C276. My point is this. The idea, in my view, anyhow, of giving a vote to a woman because she is the wife of an elector who is qualified as the result of holding property, was merely to increase the women's franchise?—But please remember that in the case of a large majority of women sought to be enfranchised is going to be the man enfranchisement qualification for women, is it not, apart from our objection to it, the psychological objection, as we put it, we also say that it is going to double the vote of the landlords and the capitalists, in a large measure. Even if it does not, as Miss Pickford pointed out, in the case of all those who hold the property qualification, it is certainly going to double the vote in considerable measure for those who are going to be very much opposed to our reforms or the reforms we stand for. The third objection that we have (it is not only one objection) is that because it is going to be spread over the length and breadth of India, it is going to be very difficult for us to organise this vote, and we do want, in the first one or two elections, to be able to have an organised women's vote that is really going to count for us, and carry real weight, so there is more than one objection. We attach equal importance, as I have said to the quality as well as to the quantity of the women's vote.

C277. Why should it double the vote of the property holder, if, as you say, the probable result will be that the husband would say: "I do not want you to vote"?—He may force her to vote for what he stands for. The other position is equally possible. He either will say to her, "I would rather you did not vote," and, therefore, you do not have the vote at all, or else he might make her vote exactly as he wishes her to vote. It all depends.

C278. With reference to that second point, as the Lord Chairman put to you, there is the question of the secrecy of the ballot to be considered there. The husband does not know how his wife will

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vote?—I can only say that it will be very difficult.

C279. Mrs. Ali said on the same point that women objected to being considered a sort of property of some man. You disagree in that matter from the Report of the Lothian Committee when they said they considered that by marriage a woman enters into a partnership with her husband, which may well confer civic rights, as well as domestic duties?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) We have got domestic duties all right, but we have not got the civic rights. When we get them, I shall be able to answer that question.

Begum Shah *Nawaz*.

C280. May I put a supplementary question on this point? Was it not a fact that until very recently women in India have never been known by the names of their husbands or their fathers; that this is a vested custom which has only been very recently introduced in Eastern countries? They were always known by what you would call your Christian names, in India?—(Rajkumari *Amrit Kaur*.) Certainly, that is so, we never have had surnames in India.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C281. With regard to the indirect votes in the Assembly, you object to that. What it amounts to is that the women elected to the Assembly are elected by the Provincial Legislatures?—Yes, and, therefore, will not be representative of the Province.

C282. And that is the only reserved seat which is elected in that way?—The only one, yes. All are elected by direct election, but we are definitely given indirect election.

C283. As a matter of practice, therefore, does this not mean that the women who are elected to the Federal Assembly will be elected really by a large majority of men?—Yes, it does.

C284. The membership of the Provinces will be mainly men?—Yes, of course.

C285. And they will probably be elected on communal grounds?—Of course.

C286. Not on feminine grounds at all?—No, never on feminine grounds.

C287. Therefore, you think this matter is obviously unjust?—Of course, naturally.

C288. As to the Upper Chamber, how would you suggest that women should be elected there?—I think we originally asked that it should be the single transferable vote, when we gave evidence before the Franchise Committee. I imagine that that is the proposal now in the

White Paper, as far as seats in the Upper House are concerned. Am I right in concluding that?—(Sir *Hari Singh Gour*.) Yes.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C289. How many seats would you suggest?—Are we given any seats at all?

C290. No, not at present?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) Fifty-fifty.

C291. You have not any proposals to make about the number of seats which should be reserved for women?—(Rajkumari *Amrit Kaur*.) We should like as large a number as possible provided that they were for women as women, and on no other basis whatever.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C292. Women elected by men and women, and not by women only?—Yes.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C293. The representative of the Indian Women's Committee for Franchise who gave evidence before this Committee suggested one or two for the Upper House?—We should be very dissatisfied with only one or two. We should want more.

Begum Shah *Nawaz*.

C294. Would you be satisfied if, out of the quota given to the Major Provinces (that is about five Provinces, I think, altogether), one seat is reserved?—How many seats would that mean altogether?

C295. That would be about five altogether?—Yes; that would be the minimum.

Mr. *Cocks*.

C296. Are you of opinion that the development of political consciousness in Indian women is one of the factors which is most likely to break down in the future the communal and caste distinctions?—Without doubt. We women are very conscious nationally, and we have never had the communal question in our ranks, and we are going to fight and see that we shall convert our men in the end to our way of thinking.

C297. This method is a developing method, is it?—Very rapidly indeed.

C298. Are you of the opinion that, generally speaking, the authors of the White Paper and the Members of the Round Table Conference, and so on, are attaching rather too much importance to the views of the Orthodox Indian Community?—Yes, I think they are; as far as we women are concerned certainly.

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C299. You think if they had the women on their side they could, I do not say defy the Orthodox people, but feel that they need not attach such an extreme importance to their views?—Of course not.

C300. You believe, therefore, that the development of the women's movement will make for the unity and strength of India in the future?—I have no doubt whatsoever on that point.

C301. Therefore those who wish to bring about the unity of India in the future should support the extension of the Women's Franchise?—Yes, and should support the representation of women on a non-communal basis, if it is really sought to help us.

C302. It has been sometimes said that women are the people who (I do not refer to India only) chiefly support the rule of the Orthodox religions. Is that so in India?—Undoubtedly they are religious, and the older generation of women are Orthodox, I cannot deny it; but I think you will find that there is a rapid advance in the outlook of women, and the younger generation can in no way be said to be Orthodox or Conservative, and, not only that, as I say, the women go even farther than the men do to-day.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C303. What did you mean by the "younger generation", Rajkumari?—When I say the younger generation I suppose I ought to say between the ages of 20 and 30, but I would go further and say up to the ages of between 40 and 50 even, and only eliminate those who are between 60 and 70—I mean the really old people.

Mr. Cocks.

C304. You think it would be wise to look forward to the future of India rather than to the movements of the past?—That has been our standpoint to-day. We want a Constitution that is going to be for the good of the future generations, because we are responsible. It really does not matter at all for us personally to-day who are helping to frame the Constitution as to whether we are in Legislatures or in Councils or not. We have to build a Constitution that is going to carry through all right and do the best by the future generations.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C305. When you want the addition of the word "sex" to the fundamental rights on page 37 of the White Paper, I presume that the reason you want the word "sex" to be added is that you have got already the recognition of two facts, namely, disabilities incidental to caste and religion?—Quite so.

C306. But the disabilities due to sex are even greater than the disabilities due to caste and to religion?—Certainly.

C307. And when you categorise caste and religion as objects of non-discrimination, you want that sex, which has been the greater subject of discrimination in the past, and is the subject of discrimination at present, should be equally emphasised?—Certainly. As I say we want it to be definitely recognised that there shall be no bar on account of sex to women having their full and free rights of citizenship and opportunities of public service in India.

C308. Because you feel that on account of your sex you suffer from as much disability as, if not greater than, other people do on account of caste and religion?—Certainly.

C309. And when you wish to enumerate the disabling clauses in respect of which the fundamental rights are to operate, you want also that the women should be mentioned there?—It follows.

C310. You say that you are not in favour of the inclusion of a wife or a widow, *qua* wife or widow, under the Register. You want a woman to go on the register as woman *qua* woman in her own right?—That is so.

C311. It has been put to you what practical difference it will make if she goes on the Register either as a wife or widow, or in her own right as woman; but would not it in the latter case add to her moral strength when she feels that she is on the Register in her own right, and not as an appanage of her husband?—That is our point.

C312. It is for that reason that you want women's rights to be recognised because they are women?—Yes, that is one of the reasons.

C313. And not because they are appurtenant to some man?—Certainly.

C313A. The question that has been put to you is a question about administrative difficulties?—Yes.

C314. The Under-Secretary of State for India drew your attention to a trial electoral roll prepared by Sir Malcolm

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Hailey in the United Provinces. That trial electoral roll was prepared through the existing agency of men in which the services of women were not utilised. Supposing you suggested that between now and the promulgation of the new Constitution in India similar electoral rolls might be prepared not only in the United Provinces but in the other Provinces in test areas with the co-operation of women, would not that be a fairer test to judge of the administrative difficulties, if any, which are likely to be encountered in the matter of bringing women on to the electoral register?—Not only would it be a fairer test, but it would eliminate those very administrative difficulties of which we have been talking.

C315. That is to say, you would then be able to say whether the administrative difficulties are really real, or whether they are not due to the fact that the test was made in circumstances which did not bring into play the full work that the women were capable of doing for their own sex?—Quite.

C316. And some forecast might be made as to the financial difficulties and as to whether they do or do not encounter any financial difficulties. It was suggested by Mr. Butler that the standard of the agency that was employed, if women were to be enlisted in preparing the electoral roll, would have to be lower. Is not the present standard the standard of Patwaris, or the village accountant in the village who gets on an average a salary of £1 a month. The Patwari is the man who prepares the register. Is not that the standard? How can it be lowered if women are employed for the purpose of helping in preparing the Register?—I understand they were contemplating having men of higher educational standards than the women that might be available, but if you are to compare the women to be employed for the help of registering the votes, naturally if they are to be compared with Patwaris their educational qualifications would be much higher than those of a Patwari.

C317. Yes?—I understood you to say you contemplated having men of perhaps even higher qualifications. I did not understand it was Patwaris.

Mr. Butler.] I think I can help by drawing attention to paragraph 24 of the Report. The differentiation is between the use of officials and non-officials, and the Franchise Committee at any rate came down against the use of non-

officials for the reasons which they set out in that paragraph. I think it might be difficult to find women officials of approximately the same status as the men who would be doing it.

Miss Pickford.

C318. Is not there a confusion of ideas here?—An effort might be made to find women who are non-officials and I believe that the official women also would be very, very willing to help.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C319. What about the teachers; would they be called officials?

Miss Pickford.

C320. My Lord Chairman, I think there is a confusion of ideas here, because I understood that the Rajkumari's point was that women of education could be used in the preparation of the roll, and I think Mr. Butler is referring to polling arrangements.

Mr. Butler.

C321. Yes, that is quite correct?—You were referring to polling arrangements and not to the preparation of the rolls.

Miss Pickford.] Mr. Butler was referring to polling arrangements.

Mr. R. A. Butler.

C322. I thought you were referring to polling arrangements?—Sir Hari Singh Gour is not.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C323. No, and I do not think you were referring to polling arrangements?—No; I was really referring to the preparation of the electoral rolls because administrative difficulties have been put forward as far as the number of women to be enfranchised is concerned.

Mr. R. A. Butler.] The same considerations apply to both.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] As a question about polling arrangements has been raised let us deal with the polling arrangements. As regards the polling arrangements, an objection has been taken; how are we going to make arrangements for the purdah women and, secondly, that there would be the difficulty of identifying them? Thirdly, if the women were to go on the electoral register without application by them, husbands will object that their wives have been put on this register. Those are the three main objections that have been raised?—Yes.

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C324. Will you kindly deal with those three objections?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) May I answer the question? I suggest the English custom should be followed. They have a registration officer here and a revising barrister. Why could not the Government of India appoint special registration women officers? In almost all our presidency towns we now have women barristers, so for the first election at least these women can be pressed into service, either honorary service or paid service, as the case may be. (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) May I say something more? You said something about purdah being a bar to women coming to the polls. I should like to say that as far as the rural areas are concerned, purdah is practically non-existent, so the question does not arise as far as a large number of women voters are concerned; and in urban areas it only applies to a certain number, and purdah is rapidly breaking down in India also, and all that you want for the purdah women is a woman at the polling booths. That is all that is required; and possibly a separate entrance for the women.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C325. Could you say something about polygamy also; what is your view? That is supposed to be also one of the objections to women becoming voters in large numbers—the difficulty arising from the fact of men having more than one wife.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C326. I will put that question. The question to which the Begum Sahiba adverted was an objection which is more theoretical now than practical because polygamy in the country is disappearing both amongst the Hindus and among the Muslims?—Yes.

C327. It is a discredited institution, but to such an extent as it does exist (there is some polygamy) the objection that has been raised is this: A man may have a plurality of wives, two or three wives, but how are you going to give the vote? Are you going to give the vote to all three, and how are you going to describe them? One answer is that one wife may be described as the wife of A, or that it should be given to one wife of A. That is one of the explanations given. Have you any observations to make on that subject? I think your answer is a very simple one; your answer is to eliminate—

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C328. Let her answer. We want the witness's answer?—Will you reply, Mrs. Ali? (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) We would say, not only give any woman the right of voting, but take away the right of that man to vote if he has two or three wives.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C329. Apart from that heroic measure there is a simpler solution for the time being, having due regard to human infirmity, namely: you want it that the women should vote as women, not as wives?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kour.) Yes.

C330. That does away with the objection about polygamy?—Yes, certainly.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C331. The next objection is really an objection that is also troubling me. That objection is this: There are certain Provinces and localities where men do not take the names of their wives and do not mention them in public. That feeling of delicacy does exist. It is disappearing, but it does exist. If the electioneering officers were to bring all women on the register without consulting the susceptibility of the husband, there might be objection on the part of the husband and there might be (it was said by one of the Honourable Members) an open revolt as in the North West Frontier Province. What is your experience and what is your comment?

Chairman.

C332. Before the witness answers, will you explain to me against whom the revolt would be led?

Sir Hari Singh Gour.] Against the man who goes to prepare the register. A man goes to prepare the register and says, "Give me the name of your wife; I want to bring her on the electoral roll." He will be subjected to shoe-beating. That is the suggestion.

Chairman.

C333. I understand the question now. May we have the answer?—As far as Muslim women are concerned, I do not think the difficulty arises at all. It may arise in the case of certain Hindu households, and there again, as I have said, if we had women rather than men to go round there would be really no difficulty in getting the names of these ladies.

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[*Continued.*]

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C334. Did you say there would be no difficulty about the Muhammadan households?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) The Mussulman never has an objection to taking his wife's names. As Sir Hari puts it, there is a certain feeling of delicacy, but I have never known any feeling of difficulty among Muslims to take their wives' names. It is true the women do not take their husband's name frequently, but they do it occasionally. (*Rajkumari Amrit Kaur*.) It is in Hindu households, where the husband may object to taking the wife's name.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C335. Is it not a question of ceremonial?—Yes. There is not going to be any real difficulty.

C336. There are occasions when the husband takes the wife's name, and *vice versa*?—Yes, certainly there are. As I say, the difficulty would arise in a very small number of cases, and we must rid ourselves of this psychology of fear which hinders progress.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C337. This is the most formidable objection which was raised, the illustration given by Sir Malcolm Hailey, and this does not apply only to wives. If it is a valid objection it will prevent almost any woman from getting on to the roll anywhere?—Exactly. We say that it is not a valid objection and that if the appointment of women is going effectually to solve that problem for us, if it did arise in a few cases, we must, as I say, banish all psychology of fear and go ahead if we want to make any progress at all.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C338. Does not it happen now that when in the Courts of Law a woman is examined as a witness she mentions "So-and-So, the wife of So-and-So"?—Certainly she does. She names everybody. May I also say in the case when the census is taken what exactly happens? As far as I am concerned I know I write down my name, and I presume all the women in the villages have their names written down.

C339. Does it not come to this, after all, that in the orthodox Hindu house a woman in the presence of her elders will not mention the name of her husband?—Quite.

C340. It does not go beyond that?—It does not go beyond that.

Begum Shah *Nawaz*.

C341. Is it not a fact, *Rajkumari*, that Muslim wives, mothers and daughters, are inheriting property belonging to their fathers and husbands in all the Provinces, except in the Punjab, and also in the North West Frontier Province, and, therefore, their names are already on the register?—It is perfectly true.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C342. I thought the point of the question raised by Sir Hari Singh Gour was not whether there was some mental objection on the part of the Hindu husband or the Mahomedan husband to give utterance to the name of his wife. I thought the point of the question was: Which one of the two, or any one, would object to the sort of enquiry that a registration officer will have to make?—I do not understand what sort of enquiry the registration officer will have to make.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] It will be, "Have you a wife; if you have a wife, what is her name?"

Sir *Hari Singh Gour*.] And "How many wives have you got?"

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] Who would object to the sort of enquiry that will have to be made by the registration officer is the point of the question.

Marquess of *Lothian*.] "Is she over 21"?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] That is the sort of question.

Chairman.

C343. The witness might care to interpose an answer now. Will you answer Dr. Ambedkar's suggestion, if you have any views?—Yes; I can only say that I do not think anybody will have any objection to a question like that. I cannot understand the mentality that even proffers a question of this nature. It seems to me wholly incomprehensible.

C344. Do you agree with that answer, Mrs. *Hamid Ali*? Do you agree that there will be no difficulty?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) I think it will depend on the way and the tone, in which a question like this is put. Ordinarily a question like that asked in good faith and with no evil intention would not be taken amiss by anybody at all.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C345. Supposing the question was put by the enquiring officer in these terms, "The Government have decided to give a vote to wives. Your wife will have a vote. I have come to take the informa-

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[Continued.]

tion. Are you married? What is the name of your wife? I am asking this because the Government have decided that a wife should have a vote." Supposing the enquiry was prefaced by those remarks, do you think there would be any resentment among Hindus and Mahomedans?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Not at all. (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) I think if men went about making those enquiries there is a likelihood of people resenting it, but certainly not if a woman goes and asks these questions.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C346. I want to ask (Mrs. Hamid Ali) one more question. You come from Bombay. You know that there are certain distinct wards which are exclusively Musselman quarters. From your experience do you really think it is possible for an election officer to enter these wards and make these enquiries?—As far as Bombay is concerned, yes. I do not think anybody would take objection in Bombay, because in Bombay we have municipal elections so often and people are trained to this kind of thing.

C347. I have an opinion on the matter. I should think myself that it would be far easier to make an enquiry of this sort in a rural area than in urban areas? That is my opinion, for what it is worth?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) I do not hold that opinion.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C348. Is it not a fact that the real objection that is voiced by Dr. Ambedkar, and men of that kind, is to an idle enquiry; but if it is made known to the husband that the enquiry is directed in order to confer upon his wife a privilege, a civic right, and a valuable civic right, then there would be no objection?—None whatever.

C349. It depends for what purpose the enquiry is made?—Quite.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C350. If it were an idle enquiry, it would be resented even in England?—Yes; everywhere.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C351. That enquiry may not be made by a man. It may be made through the instrumentality of a woman?—Yes; we have already suggested that women should be asked to help as far as possible and naturally we assume that any enquiry made by any man officer of the Govern-

ment would be made tactfully so that the question of resentment cannot arise.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C352. I have not exactly followed what is stated in this supplementary statement No. 56 in regard to the representation of women in the Federal Assembly. It is said "We have repeatedly urged that we do not desire the communal virus to enter into our united ranks." You see that the proposal of the White Paper so far as the representation of women in the Lower House is concerned is not by communal electorates, but is by a general electorate by a single transferable vote?—Yes.

C353. From that point of view I should have thought it could not be objected to on the ground of its being a communal electorate?—In the first place the seats in the Lower House of the Federal Assembly for Women are definitely to be on a communal basis. We have the Secretary of State's clear dictum on that point, in his evidence the day before yesterday or three days ago. In the Lower House of the Federal Assembly the reserved seats to which this indirect system of election refers are definitely to be on a communal basis.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C354. Your objection is to the reservation of seats on the communal basis?—Yes; and further the indirect system of election to those seats by legislatures which must, in the very nature of the Constitution as proposed to-day, be on communal lines.

Miss Mary Pickford.] May I just interpose here? In the Secretary of State's reply when he said that the communal question was involved he was then referring to the women's seats on the Provincial Council of Bengal. It was not in reference to the seats in the legislative assembly.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C355. That is what I thought. If I may draw the attention of the witness to page 89 of the White Paper, Appendix II, I should have thought that that matter had been settled once and for all. You also refer to it. "Election to the women's seat in each of the provinces to which one is allocated will be by the Members of the Provincial Legislature voting by means of the single transferable vote"?—Yes; but my point is this. May I, then, know

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if the Secretary of State in answer to Miss Pickford's question was referring to reserved seats on a communal basis for the Provincial Council of Bengal. May I understand whether the communal question does not enter into the reserved seats for women in the Lower House? Are they to be reserved on a non-communal basis? I should like to be clear on this point. I want to know on what basis these seats are to be reserved.

Mr. R. A. Butler.

C356. I think it is perfectly clear that the Councils as they are constituted would elect women representatives by the single transferable vote?—Yes; but Dr. Ambedkar raised the question as to why we think it should be on a communal basis, and we understood from the Secretary of State that, so far as reserved seats are concerned, the communal question does enter very definitely into it. Now Miss Pickford has said that the Secretary of State, when he made this remark, was referring only to seats reserved in the Bengal Council. I want to know: Are the seats that are definitely reserved for women in the Lower House of the Federal Assembly reserved on a non-communal basis, or reserved on a communal basis?

Marquess of Lothian.

C357. I think the answer is inherent in the two tables on pages 90 and 93 of the White Paper. They are non-communal for this reason that in the first place in certain provinces there is only one woman; in the second place if you compare the table marked "Muslim" or "Mahommedan" as the case may be, on page 90 and page 93, you will find in the case of Provincial Assemblies a certain number of seats are allotted to women on a communal basis. These things do not appear in Appendix II?—So that in the Federal Assembly, the reservation of seats is non-communal; that is to say, it will not matter, for instance, if there were nine seats there whether all the nine were filled by Mahommedans or Hindus. Am I to understand that?

Mr. R. A. Butler.

C358. That is why they are elected by provinces. There is no mention of the communal question in this Table?—But as far as the weightage in the Lower House is concerned, will those women's

seats go in 51 per cent. in proportion to the communities?

C359. They will go according to the result of the single transferable vote, but not by any prejudged communal decision?—Anyhow, our point is that the Provincial legislatures will elect them; they, at any rate, will be communal.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C360. If the election of the women members of the Federal Assembly is going to be by the provincial legislative council members on the principle of single transferable vote, do not you apprehend that the voting will go on communal lines?—That is exactly my point, that the indirect election is going to be by provinces.

C361. It will work on the same principle?—It will work on the same principle, apart from the fact that we object to indirect election.

C362. It will be on the same principle, if I may take it further, as the representation to the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislative House, which you will remember, would be by the members of the Provincial Legislative Council, by a single transferable vote. The Government expect by that method that a sufficient number of Musselmen will come into the Upper Legislative Chamber?—Certainly, and we object to this.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C363. Let me follow this further, because, to my mind, there is a certain amount of confusion, and I should like to get it cleared up. First of all, do you object to indirect election as such?—Yes.

C364. You do?—Yes.

C365. That is one objection?—Yes.

C366. You do not want the women representatives who are to represent women in the Federal Lower House to be elected by indirect election from the Provincial Legislative Council?—Most definitely not.

C367. You want some sort of a direct constituency provided?—As we are against reserved seats, if they are reserved for us on a communal basis, of course, really this question as far as we are concerned does not arise, but we would, of course, want women to enter—

C368. Let me put a question first to clear the ground. Do you want any seats to be reserved for women at all in the Lower House?—I have said that we would recommend for the time being until such time as adult suffrage is obtained through our organisations, the acceptance

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of reservation, provided it were definitely laid down that the women's seats would be on a non-communal basis, and through the means of joint electorates. That is the only condition on which we would accept it.

C369. I quite follow two things. You want for the time being a certain number of seats reserved for women?—We have always been opposed to reservation.

C370. The second thing I have understood from you—correct me if I am wrong—is that you do not want that provision for the representation of women in the Federal Lower House by any system of indirect election. That is the second point you have made?—Yes.

C371. What I want to ask you is that . . . ?—You say we want reservation, I have told you we have always been opposed to reservation.

C372. You do not want any reservation at all?—We have always said that we do not want reservation, but, as I say, if reservations are to be forced down on us as so many things have been forced down on us against our wishes, then the only conditions on which we would recommend the acceptance of reservation to our organisations would be definitely that they would be through a system of joint electorates and direct election, and if the seats were on a purely non-communal basis, that is to say, that we have the right to put on women of our choice.

C373. If the matter were left to your choice, you would not want any earmarking of seats for women as such in the Federal Lower House?—Certainly not.

C374. If it is to be, then you would want it on a system of joint electorate and direct election?—Yes; direct election and a non-communal basis.

C375. Let me take the non-communal basis. Do you want this constituency for direct election to consist only of women in that particular constituency?—No; we want men and women.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C376. You want this constituency to be a sort of composite constituency, in which the voters will be both men and women?—Yes.

C377. With this restriction that the candidate to be ultimately elected from that constituency would be a woman?—Yes; that is to say, if a woman was to be elected to a reserved seat, it would naturally follow that it must be a woman.

C378. How would you provide these direct constituencies for the Legislative Assembly?—As I say we have not got any constructive proposals on this because

we have throughout been opposed to reservation. We would leave that to the discretion of the Committee, but if reservation were given to us, on the terms and the only terms on which we would accept it, we would leave it to the discretion of the Committee to form such constituencies as would be the most representative.

C379. I thought you said in answer to a question that you objected to this indirect system of election provided in the White Paper for the representation of women in the Lower House of the Federal Legislature, because, in a certain sense, it would be, what shall I say, communally-minded?—Yes.

C380. That the representatives in the various provincial councils would act in a communal manner in the exercise of their votes, and that is the ground of your objection?—I have already answered this question, have I not?

C381. Yes. I want to put one more question. Further, I see, and I want to get this matter clear, that you object to the indirect election that is proposed in the White Paper because you think that the representatives of the different communities in the provincial legislature will be communally-minded, and, therefore, communal considerations will be imported in that election?—May I give you the answer again. We object to indirect election, first of all, because naturally we want direct election.

C382. Yes. I follow that?—That is the first objection. The second objection is that when this indirect election for us is proposed through the Provincial Councils, those Provincial Councils which are going to be on communal lines will naturally bring that communal question again to the women that they elect.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] That is true, but I want to put a further question. I quite understand your objection that to have different representatives of the different communities in the Provincial Legislative Council would import a material consideration in the election of women.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C383. That is only one of your objections to the indirect election, but I understand another objection is also on the ground that it is indirect?—I have said so more than once.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C384. The question is this. Take, for instance, your direct constituency, any constituency that you may like to take,

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for instance the City of Bombay. You will have in that constituency, which you would desire to be specially designed for the election of a woman representative in the Lower House, electorates of both men and women drawn from different communities?—Yes.

C385. Do you mean to suggest that those voters who would take part in the election of a woman representative would be less communally minded than the representatives of those larger communities in the Provincial Legislative Council who would be participating in the election of a woman candidate on the indirect basis?—Without doubt, because the communal question exists far more among the type which goes into the Legislature than it does among the masses of the people.

C386. But I want to draw your attention to this fact, that these very electorates will be electing the men who will be the voters for the indirect election?—It may be so, but when it is a question of joint electorates and we are going to get the votes of joint electorates, the communal question will not exist there—it cannot exist—to the same extent that it does in a Provincial Council which has been elected by separate electorates and where the communal question is alive and must be very much alive.

C387. Do you think that in the general electorate the men and women in India do not act in a communal manner?—Certainly not in the general mass.

C388. Have you ever seen a poll going on?—Yes. We have had a very recent example in the case of one of the women members of our organisation who topped the poll in Bombay with the joint electorates, and practically no women at all but all men: the Depressed Classes and everyone voting and she topped the poll. That is in a municipal election. Then there was not only her but another lady, and we have had examples in elections in Universities in Putna where women have been elected by men, and no difficulty on the communal question has arisen.

C389. When the point is whether a woman will be elected, no doubt the communal feeling will be less in a direct election than it will be in an indirect election?—Certainly. Whenever the indirect election is going to be by means of the Council, it is going to be permeated by communalism.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C390. Am I right in saying that there has been a great awakening among Indian women in the last quarter of a

century?—There can be no two questions about that.

C391. This awakening is not confined to urban areas nor even to the Reform circles, but it is increasing generally?—Throughout the length and breadth of India. I may say, speaking from my own humble experience, that I find the village women almost more keen to come and listen to me than the urban women in my own constituency.

C392. I take it that you agree with my view that it has been recently felt that whole departments of women's life, including the whole marital state, the law of inheritance, conjugal rights and so on, require modification in the light of modern events?—Without doubt.

C393. You and the leaders of this movement feel that this reform is not likely to come unless women have a vote?—Without doubt.

C394. You also feel, I take it, that the reform will be in the Legislatures by legislative enactments?—Again without doubt.

C395. Have you considered the question, if the men members were not compelled to seek the women's votes, whether purely out of altruistic motives or generous impulses, women can expect any large measure of reform in the Legislatures?—I think undoubtedly the women's vote where men are concerned would have a great bearing on Reform. We would get very much more help from those men that we have returned and who feel that they have been returned by women's votes—it is going to make a great difference.

C396. You think it is going to make a great difference if the candidate has to go and beg women for their votes?—Yes.

C397. What ratio would you like to work up to—what is your ultimate ideal of ratio with men's votes?—I do not follow you there.

C398. What proportion would you like to work to—how many men, how many women?—According to our own proposals we have said one to four—that is the minimum, one to four or one to five.

C399. That is your present demand?—That is the minimum, but, ultimately, certainly half and half.

C400. Would you mention any minimum period in which you would like to work up to that ratio?—Certainly I would like to envisage adult franchise in India after a period of two elections.

C401. In 10 years?—Ten or 15 years at the most.

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C402. You would like to work up to that ratio?—Yes, if we are really meaning to progress.

C403. Would you tell us the present condition of the women's vote? Are they voters in all the Provinces?—No, they are not.

C404. How many Provincial Councils are there in which women sit as members elected?—I do not think there are any, so far as I know. I do not think a woman can sit as an elected member on any Council.

Miss Pickford.

C405. I did not quite hear whether you said they do or that they can but have not done so?—They can.

Begum Shah Nawaz.] In all the Provinces they can.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C406. In those Councils where they have actually been members I understand it has been by nomination?—Yes, there is no such thing as election.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C407. To the Legislative Assembly they have never been nominated so far?—Never.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C408. Is there a disqualification?—I think not. (*Mrs. Hamid Ali.*) May I point out in connection with this that it is very lately that the Provinces have done away with the disqualification—it has been done very, very recently; in some Provinces so recently that they have scarcely had time for another election since the disqualification was done away with.

Mr. M. B. Jayaker.

C409. I will ask a few questions on the communal matter. On that I suppose the views you express are shared by Mrs. Hamid Ali?—(*Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.*) Yes.

C410. May I take it that the members of your women's Associations are drawn from women generally?—Yes.

C411. Membership is not in terms of Hindu or Mahomedan?—No; we do not think in terms of Hindu.

C412. Do any of the women's representative organisations ask for reservation on the communal basis for the Provincial Legislatures?—Not one.

C413. When it was announced did they protest against it?—Yes, most strongly did they protest.

C414. Did any women's organisation support that reservation, so far as you are aware?—Not one that I know of.

C415. I suppose you regarded it as a retrograde move?—Of course.

C416. Why did you regard it as a retrograde move?—Because there is no hope for our country as long as the spirit of communalism is allowed to remain and is encouraged.

C417. You think that the communal virus would be introduced into regions where it does not exist at the present moment?—Yes, without doubt.

C418. Have you considered the question whether any question might come up in the Central or Provincial Legislatures on which the voting would be Muslim women against Hindu women?—I cannot envisage it now, but what I mean is this. If women go in there, as I said in my preliminary remarks, whatever the religion or caste that they belong to, they would work for women as a whole; that is to say, when any remedial legislation for women comes before the Legislature the Hindu women support it to the *nth* and *vice versa*, but if we are sent into the Legislatures on the communal basis a position may arise when the Mahomedan woman or the Hindu woman out of loyalty to her community may be asked to refrain from voting on a question which she considers vital to the interests of the womanhood of India because she may be going against her particular community. Do you understand me? It is going to cramp us enormously in our work in these very Legislatures.

C419. May I take it you apprehend that, if this system were ultimately adopted, a Hindu woman's loyalty is likely to be divided between the claims of sex and the claims of India?—(*Mrs. Hamid Ali.*) May I answer this question? In present circumstances, if we are given this communal electorate, this separate electorate, and not a joint electorate, the woman who would be mass-minded would refrain from going into the Councils or the Assemblies and the only women who would go would be women of the communal type who would be the tame women, and the men would be able to do anything they like with them, and they will vote on the communal basis.

C420. Supposing you had two Mahomedan women, one communal and another one a little more national and temperate-minded: which, if this process were to be ultimately adopted, do

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you think is likely to be elected?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Naturally, the communally-minded woman, but she will not be elected on the women's vote, please remember.

C421. May I ask you another question? I want to ask you about the suggestion that women who come in through the door of their husband's property should apply. Supposing that was insisted on, what do you think would be the result on the strength of the women's vote?—It would diminish their voting strength enormously.

C422. May I ask your attention to the White Paper, Appendices IV and V, the introductory note under the heading of "Franchise"? I do not know whether you have the same copy?—We have the Indian edition—I have what you are referring to now.

C423. I am asking your attention to the close of paragraph 3 in those Appendices which deal with the women's vote to a certain extent: "The proportion of women to men in the electorate will depend upon the number of women who are actually registered under the qualifications in question. There are practical difficulties in placing on returning officers the whole responsibility for registration of those qualifications. But his Majesty's Government are very anxious to secure that the proportion of women electors should be adequate and further consideration of the above arrangements may be necessary." You would very strongly desire the reconsideration of this question in the light of the comments which you have made?—Of course.

C424. Do you agree with the view expressed in the memorandum submitted to the Joint Select Committee by the British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise, from which I will just read read one sentence to you: "If the Joint Select Committee sincerely desire to satisfy the legitimate expectations raised among the women of India and of Great Britain by its repeated declarations," which are mentioned in this document—"we feel that means of surmounting the administrative difficulties can and will be found." Do you share those sentiments?—Absolutely.

C425. You are speaking as a representative of all your Associations when you make that remark?—Certainly.

C426. Do you agree with that?—(Mrs. Hamid Ali.) Certainly I do.

C427. Then a word about the wife and widow. I know that you are opposed to this method of securing the franchise, but

have you been able to find out what is the opinion of women on this point who can come in only as wives and widows and not through the door of an educational or property qualification?—(Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) When we have had meetings and have had this question put to women—they are illiterate women, very poor women, whose husbands probably would have no property for qualification—they have all said: "We want it. Please get it for us in our own right." That is a very definite feeling amongst them. As I say, they all press for adult suffrage, and adult suffrage, in my opinion, is preferable.

C428. Do I understand you to say—correct me if I am wrong—that those women whose sole chance of coming in as voters is as wife or widow would forfeit this right?—I think, if I might say so, if it was put to them, they would say "Yes."

C429. Is not it the case that the women deciding this question would be voters on some other principle like educational qualifications?—No, because, as you will see from the proposals to enfranchise women, the large majority of the women proposed to be brought on the electoral roll will be from the wives and widows—is not that so?

C430. The last question I wish to ask you is this. You would have no objection to reserved seats, I imagine, if the communal taint were removed from it?—Well, as I say, our organisations have throughout been against reservation, but if the communal taint were removed, I think that we would certainly tolerate it.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C431. You would tolerate it?—I am speaking now personally. We, as elected representatives of this organisation, would have to put this question to them. I recommend reservation for the time being, provided that it was through joint electorates and on a non-communal basis. I think we would certainly recommend the acceptance of that with, like all our alternative proposals, a limitation for a definite period of years.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C432. You are making two conditions: first there should be an automatic time limit beyond which it shall not endure?—Yes.

C433. And, secondly, that it shall be on a joint electorate basis?—Yes, and non-communal.

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C434. On a joint electorate basis?—Yes, a joint electorate and reserved without any proportion in the Councils on the communal ratio.

C435. So far as your voting is concerned in your organisations—and several instances must have come up as a matter of voting—do you recall any instance where the voting has gone on the lines of Hindu women against Mohammedan women?—Never, never.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C436. My Lord Chairman, I do not think I have many questions to put to the witnesses after all the replies that they have given to the many questions that have been put to them this morning, but I would like just to ask them two or three questions. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, would I be right in concluding from your evidence that whatever are the qualifications which ultimately the Joint Select Committee will accept for women voters, if those qualifications give you the vote in your individual right, the Women's Associations will be prepared to accept them?—Certainly, because we want the full quota; but as I say, we do lay great stress on the numbers as well as on the quality of the vote, and the fact that it should be given to us in our inherent right.

C437. Do I understand aright that the minimum number of women voters acceptable to you, both for the Provincial as well as for the Central Assemblies, is that recommended by the Lothian Committee?—The very minimum.

C438. Adult suffrage not having been accepted, and if the women are to have the votes under different qualifications, do you not think that your Women's Organisations would be well advised to think twice before they refused reserved seats?—I told you that we would be willing to accept reserved seats on the conditions that I have already laid down.

C439. Realising that when the fight between the different communities in certain provinces was over one or two seats here and there, and that reservation of seats might mean their division being on communal lines, most of the Women's Organisations did not ask for reservation of seats; is that not so?—Of course.

C440. In the absence of a settlement between the two major communities, would it be right for you to say that almost all the Muslim women within these organisations would ask for these seats to be on non-communal lines?—

Certainly; the Muslim women, in the Punjab, for instance. I can say I have never had any Muslim women in the Punjab asking for reserved seats on communal lines. (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) I have not yet come across any Association which has sent any Resolution asking for any reserved seats on the communal basis.

C441. Is it not a fact that they have not asked for any reserved seats?—Yes.

C442. But if there are to be reservations, do you think that all the Muslim women in all these Provinces would agree to their having them on a non-communal basis in the absence of a settlement between the two communities?—The great majority of them. (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) Speaking for our Organisations, where we have a system of election, the question of Hindu and Muslim has never cropped up, and we invariably do have numbers of Muslim women working for us and elected by us. I do not think that our Muslim women Members of our Organisation will have no objection.

C443. My point is this, Rajkumari, that the women of India, as united Indians, demand the number of seats being reserved for them, but when it comes to the question of these reserved seats being accepted by His Majesty's Government and when there has been no settlement between the two major communities, do you think that all the Muslim women in your Organisation will agree to having them divided on a non-communal basis?—They will not agree to having them on a communal basis. They would certainly agree to what our Organisations have invariably stood for.

C444. Have not some of your constituencies differed on that point?—No; no constituencies have differed.

C445. What about the Karachi constituency?—Only three members of that constituency.

C446. And some of the Members of your Standing Committee as well, I understand?—On our Standing Committee, apart from yourself, was there any other Member who differed?—I do not think so; I have not had any information on that point.

C447. Supposing you were to ask some of these Muslim women, especially in some of the Provinces where Muslims are in the majority, like the Punjab and Sind, for instance, to decide the question on its merits, that in the absence of a settlement between two communities, if there are to be reserved seats, would they

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[Continued.]

accept them on the basis of joint electorates, do you think the majority of them would agree with you?—I still think they would agree with us. May I give you a small instance of my own constituency which is 90 per cent. Muhammadan? A question of membership, of having two women members on the local municipality came up, and, as you know, women members of a municipality can only be nominated and the Commissioner has the right to nominate them. I put it to a very large meeting at which there were, I think, about 1,500 women present also from the villages and the surrounding suburbs, and the town of Jullundur, practically all Muslims—I said to them that the Commissioner has suggested, if there were two women willing to stand for the municipality, one Hindu and one Muhammadan, would they be good enough to elect those two from amongst themselves, so that I might submit the names to him. The answer that came without one moment's thought was: "Why should the Commissioner nominate them? Why should we not nominate them?" The second is: "We do not want to send one Hindu and one Muhammadan. Why should we eliminate you because you are not a Muhammadan or a Hindu." This is from a very important constituency in the Punjab, and this is the spirit that does animate the women of India to-day.

C448. Is it not a fact that both the Muslim women of your Standing Committee from the Punjab dissented from it?—Miss Feroze Uddin's opinion is not on record. As far as I know, yours is.

C449. Of course, I do not wish to press the point any further. All I wanted to say was that my experience has been something quite different, because most of these Muslim women have said to me that their husbands would never let them go to the men members of the opposite community for votes, when they themselves were not prepared to go in the absence of a settlement?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) But that proves the point that the men are communal-minded.

C450. Yes, I agree?—(Rajkumari *Amrit Kaur*.) Therefore, why make the women communal-minded?—(Mrs. *Hamid Ali*.) The same thing happened to me in another district where we were asked to send in the names of two women for municipal and school Committee work, and our Hindu women there suggested the names of non-Hindu women, because they thought they were the fittest to go in.

C451. I quite agree that one happy feature of the women's movement has

been this, that there has been no communal feeling, as far as the women of India are concerned; but do you not think that when His Majesty's Government has been forced to give an award, those who wished to work for any change in the system of electorates would be well advised to do it in India, rather than over here?—(Rajkumari *Amrit Kaur*.) Certainly we should work in India, but, at the very beginning of a Constitution, we object to being forced into a room into which we have never wished to enter. You say the decision has been forced upon His Majesty's Government. By whom? By the men—only the men who were here at the Round Table Conference—not by a large section of the men in India, apart from those who came to the Joint Select Committee or the Round Table Conference, and certainly never by the women of India.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C452. Do I understand you to say that you apprehend that the happy relations now existing between Hindu and Muslim women would be destroyed gradually if this virus were introduced?—Certainly, gradually. We still feel that our Muhammadan and Hindu sisters will rise above it. But you must admit there must be a danger. It will make concerted action on our part more difficult in the future, and we do want concerted action. That is why we have had such inordinate success in the women's movement in India. If you are going to destroy that for us now, I might say all the nationally-minded women of India—and there are a great number of Muslim women who are nationally-minded—will be discontented. From the conservative Muhammadan centre of Lucknow the last wire I had from one of our members was: "Do not co-operate with the Committee that is forcing us into communalism."

Begum Shah *Nawaz*.

C453. My point is this; is not the field open to us in India itself to bring about a settlement between the different communities?—My answer to you is that the field is invariably open, but our task is going to be made much more difficult, if here and now, by the White Paper, we are forced into accepting conditions which run contrary to those very measures which you wish to work for just as much as I do, I hope.

C454. You would agree with me, would you not, that if there are to be reserved seats, we should have them in all the

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Provincial Legislatures as well as in the two Central Assemblies?—Yes. As I have said before, I have not been able to understand the logic of the White Paper proposals, because of the extraordinary way in which they vary from Province to Province. I do not understand it at all.

C455. Would you tell the Committee something about your constituency in Peshawar and the North-West Frontier?—Yes. We have only recently had formed a constituency of the All-India Women's Conference in Peshawar, and we are shortly to have one in Ambala as well; that is a Frontier Province. The last thing these women said to me at Lucknow last winter was: "If you are to go to give evidence before the Joint Select Committee, never give up adult franchise or any system based thereon, because if we find in the Frontier we do not get adult suffrage, we are not going to come into the picture at all, and we are very anxious to have our full strength in the future Constitution."

Marquess of Lothian.

C456. Rajkumari, a very few questions. I am afraid we have already tested you to the maximum, but I know your capacity, from my own experience in Lahore. First of all, on the point of the application, the estimate of the Franchise Committee was that the number of wives who would be qualified on the property qualification was just over 4,000,000?—Yes.

C457. I do not know whether you read Sir Tej Saprū's analysis of the reasons why women would be reluctant to apply to be put on the electoral roll?—I am afraid I have not been able to read them in detail; I have just glanced over them.

C458. Supposing the application condition is maintained, what sort of proportion of those 4,000,000 women would, in practice, be likely actually to apply to be put on the roll—that is, probably a year before the election takes place?—I should be very much surprised if, out of those 4,000,000, even 1,000,000 applied—very surprised, indeed. I should be tempted to put it at even a lower figure than that.

C459. Then would you turn to your supplementary statement, section (B). Am I right in thinking that your suggestion for putting women on the roll for the Assembly is that you should take the women qualified in their own property right for the Provincial Assembly and make them the voters for the Assembly.

Is that what it means?—Yes. We have said this in the case of the women qualified under the literacy as well as under the property qualification, because we felt it would be administratively so much easier to have just the one roll; and, in the second place, it would give us a stronger women's vote for the Federal Assembly, which is going to be the main House for all that we want done in India.

C460. That is the Assembly in which, under the Government proposals, women will have only one vote in 20?—Yes.

C461. Would you just tell us why you think the Assembly is the main Assembly, from the point of view of the women's case?—I think it is going to be in this Assembly that all Bills for educational reform, for social reform, for the removal of our legal disabilities, which will be All-India questions, are going to come forward.

C462. Surely, education and the greater part of ordinary social reform will be a Provincial matter, will it not?—No; I think when it comes to the removal of disabilities under which women suffer, legal or otherwise, it must come before the All-India Legislature.

C463. At any rate, the opinion of your Associations is that women's questions will figure very prominently?—Yes, very prominently; that is what we feel, and we do want a stronger women's vote for the Members returned to that House, men or women.

C464. Just one question on the so-called wives' qualification. You have no objection in itself to property being a qualification for a woman being put on the roll?—Property in her own right, no.

C465. Supposing the qualification for what is called the wives' vote was *mo-ti*-field, so that the property itself qualified either a man or a woman, or, in the event of her being married, both—in other words, that the woman was qualified in her own right by reason of the fact of the property qualification, would you feel that there would be the same psychological objection?—No, not quite the same. (Mrs. Hamid Ali.) May I ask, would a man be qualified on his wife's property to vote also.

C466. I was going on to ask you that, whether if you added that, such husbands as were not qualified by their own property, but whose wives were qualified, and were on the roll, would not that remove a good deal of your objection?—Only one part of our objection, not a great deal. (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.) We have other objections as well.

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[*Continued.*]

C467. On that particular point, would that not moderate your feelings, a bit?—No, because, after all, the husbands who would be enfranchised on the wives' qualification would be so few in number.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C467A. You would regard it as a sop?—Yes; we should really regard it as a sop.

Marquess of Lothian.

C468. My last question is this. You have stressed the importance that you attach to having adult franchise in the towns, because a certain number of persons would be returned to the Legislature by men and women voting in, more or less, equal numbers?—Yes.

C468A. I think you have estimated that that would cover about 14 per cent. of the seats? Is that correct?—We said that the adult population in towns was 14,000,000.

C469. It does not matter for the purpose of my argument. I think most people who have contested elections would say, that if you wanted to get women's questions considered by a Legislature, you would have very much more effect if all the Members of the Legislature, when fighting their elections, had to take into account a considerable number of women voters. With the suffrages, both sides would be anxious to get in in order to win, and, therefore, would have to consider the matter as of interest to those women voters, and you would bring women's questions far more formidably before the Legislature where every candidate had to pay a consideration to the women's vote than if only a small proportion had to pay rather more attention, because there were more women voters in their constituency. Have you any answer to that?—Yes, because, as I say—I think we have put it in our supplementary statement—that these four and a quarter millions who are to be enfranchised under the proposals of the wives' and widows'

vote will be scattered over the length and breadth of India, and in the eleven Provinces there will probably be less than half a million in each, and a certain number of those will also be in the urban areas, so that this vote is not going to be strong enough to count and to carry any real weight. Therefore, we have suggested, only as long as we do not get this adult franchise, that we should be given the vote in an area, even though it covers a small area, and even though it will affect a smaller number of men and women who are returned to the Legislatures; at any rate, let us have them in large numbers and, through them, influence the other members. That is our answer to it.

C470. You prefer a small number of members who are intensely responsive to the women's vote than to have a large number of voters who are less responsive?—Yes, but my point is, that if we could make our voice really heard amongst the larger number, we will accept it. Therefore, I say, if in addition to constituencies in urban areas, you are willing to give us some franchise in the rural areas, we will accept at once, but give us the quality of the vote, as well as the quantity.

Chairman.

C471. Subject to your approval, Rajkumari, I propose to make arrangements for you to make a statement before the main Committee. May I assume that that course is agreeable to you?—Yes; but does that mean that the statement will be all that we do before the Main Committee? Will there be no opportunity for those Members who have not been able to hear us to-day, to cross-examine us?

Chairman.] The Committee, when the statement is made, must decide that for itself. Under the House of Lords procedure, it rests with the Committee itself, and I am not entitled to give you any view at all.

(*After a short adjournment.*)

Mrs. P. K. SEN and Mrs. L. MUKERJI are called in and examined.

Chairman.

C472. Mrs. P. K. Sen and Mrs. L. Mukerji, you are here on behalf of the Mahila Samiti Ladies' Association?—(Mrs. Sen.) Yes, that is so.

C473. And you have provided the Committee with Memoranda numbered 41, 42 and 43?—Yes, that is so.

The Memoranda are as follows:—

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[Continued.]

MEMORANDUM 41 BY MRS. P. K. SEN ON THE FRANCHISE OF WOMEN.

The women of Bengal strongly protest against the reduction of the voting strength of women in the new constitution proposed by the White Paper as compared to the voting strength suggested by the Indian Franchise Committee.

The following memorandum stresses the minimum voting strength which will satisfy the women of Bengal and which they regard as a preliminary stage towards eventual adult suffrage.

THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES.

1. In the memorandum submitted by the women of Bengal to the members of the Indian Franchise Committee the proposal of the Statutory Commission to enfranchise the wives and widows of men entitled to vote under a property qualification was approved, and it was also proposed that an indirect group system of voting, for the rest of the adult women population, should be adopted. If both the proposals had been accepted, about 30 per cent. of adult women would have been enfranchised.

2. The Indian Franchise Committee's proposals, if adopted, would have enfranchised only 10 per cent. of adult women but 43 per cent. of adult men, giving a voting ratio of one woman to roughly 4½ men.

3. The proposals of the White Paper now cut down that ratio to one woman to seven men, and in practice the ratio will be still less, since it is proposed to make women apply to be put on the electoral roll.

4. The women of Bengal advocated simple literacy as a qualification for the franchise of women over 21 years of age. This qualification was accepted by the Indian Franchise Committee and forms part of their proposals.

5. We are therefore dismayed to find in the White Paper that the educational qualification recommended for Bengal is the matriculation or school-leaving certificate (Appendix V, p. 106). So high a qualification would enfranchise a fair number of men but an insignificant number of women.

6. We desire to urge most strongly that simple literacy as a qualification for women should be restored, since it would enable women who have been educated at home to become voters. Further, it would serve as a stimulus to adult edu-

cation, and would automatically increase women's voting strength as time goes on, without new legislation.

7. The provision that women should be required to make application to be entered on the electoral roll would inevitably reduce very considerably the potential number of women voters. It is therefore essential that this provision should be deleted. We do not see the difficulty in placing the wife's name on the Register at the same time as that of the husband. It would be far easier to get the particulars required from the homes than for women to make special application to the Returning Officer.

8. In the event, however, of its being found unavoidably necessary to retain this provision, it is submitted that the number of women voters thus lost must be made good by some other means, e.g. by extending the husband's property qualification to wives of all propertied voters, and not merely to the wives of men possessing the higher property qualifications at present prescribed for the Provincial Councils. If this is not done women will fail to secure any appreciable representation.

9. We approve the wife's vote on the husband's qualification both because of its convenience and because it enfranchises women in rural as well as in urban areas. If for any reason it should be considered impossible, it would be necessary to substitute some other qualifications which would bring up the voting strength to the requisite number. For this purpose we should be prepared to accept an alternative qualification, if it could be shown that the total number of women enfranchised would be *not less* than that proposed by the Indian Franchise Committee.

THE FEDERAL LEGISLATURE.

10. The proposals of the White Paper admittedly leave the ratio of women to men electors the same as at present for the Legislative Assembly, on the ground of administrative difficulties and of objections to a differential franchise based on education (p. 12, par. 21). The ratio is about one woman to 20 men. Yet it is expressly stated that "His Majesty's Government are very anxious to secure that the proportion of women electors should be adequate." (p.94.)

11. In view of the very small proportion of women enfranchised under the

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White Paper proposals, and the importance to women of subjects like marriage and inheritance dealt with by the Federal Legislature, we would urge that, in spite of administrative difficulties, some arrangement to increase the number of women is necessary. If it is found to be impossible to carry out the recommendations of the Franchise Committee, we suggest that the roll of women voters for the Provincial Councils, on the husband's property qualification, might also be used for the Federal Legislature.

THE UPPER CHAMBER.

12. For the Upper Chamber, qualifications should be such as to secure the eligibility of a considerable number of women.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

13. The political status of the women of India should be dealt with in the Bill for the new Constitution and should not be decided subsequently by the Provincial Governments or Legislatures.

14. On the principle that men and women should have fundamentally the

same rights and duties as citizens there should be a clause in the new Constitution clearly providing that the rights of women as citizens shall not be denied or abridged in any manner whatsoever on account of sex.

ELECTORATES.

15. It is a matter of deep regret to the women of India, who have always been free from communal differences, that they should be compelled to record their votes in separate electorates. Our women should be able to seek election, for the seats reserved for them, without consideration of the creed or community to which they belong.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion we would emphatically urge that it is absolutely necessary that women should be given an effective voice in questions of government which vitally affect their welfare, and that they cannot accept any smaller proportion of voters than the 6,600,000 which the Lothian Committee has recommended.

MEMORANDUM 42. ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN UNDER THE NEW INDIAN CONSTITUTION, HANDED IN BY MRS. P. K. SEN.

We desire to present this memorandum to you and to request you to give special consideration to the points raised in it as the matter concerns the welfare of nearly half the population of India.

Civil rights and duties of women.

2. In the first place, we wish to urge that a clause should be inserted in the new constitution safeguarding women from disabilities imposed on them as women in the exercise of civic rights. Sex should be no disqualification for serving India and *men and women should have fundamentally the same rights and duties as citizens.*

Franchise.

3. We are also keenly interested in the franchise qualifications for women and we earnestly hope that this matter will receive very careful consideration by the Committee, and that such qualifications may be prescribed for women as will give them their due share in electing representatives to the legislatures. We desire to place a few important points on this subject before you.

Present position of women with regard to franchise.

4. The present franchise given on equal terms to men and women, and based mainly on property, produces in actual practice, a very great discrepancy between them in voting power, as the number of women voters is at present wholly inadequate when compared to the total population of women. Statistics show that while the proportion of men voters is 10 per cent. of the total adult male population the proportion of women voters is only .6 per cent. of the total adult female population. We would emphasise the fact that adult franchise would provide a solution of this disparity between men and women voters, but if there is no hope of immediate adult franchise in any form, *we wish to point out, that as a temporary measure and until adult franchise is obtained, special qualifications for women will be required to increase their voting strength and make it a real factor in elections.*

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Methods for giving women an adequate voting strength.

5. Certain proposals have been put forward for these special qualifications for women:

(1) The Indian Statutory Commission recommended:—

(a) being the wife, over 25 years of age, of a man who has the property qualification to vote.

(b) being a widow, over 25 years of age, whose husband at the time of his death was so qualified.

(2) The women delegates at the Round Table Conference in 1930 supported this proposal with the modification that the age should be the same as that for men, i.e., 21 and not 25 years.

(3) The Franchise Sub-Committee of that Conference (1930) agreed that special qualifications should be prescribed for women and recommended that the expert Franchise Committee should devote particular attention to this question, in the light of the evidence available and of the proposal made by the women delegates.

(4) The Indian Franchise Committee in 1932 recommended for the Provincial Legislatures that, for both men and women, the property qualification should be substantially lowered, and that there should also be an education qualification. Recognising however that, in the case of women, "theoretic equality under a restricted franchise means in practice extreme inequality," they proposed that, in the case of men, the educational qualification should be the passing of the Upper Primary Standard, or an equivalent test; in the case of women, simple literacy. They also proposed another special qualification for women, viz., being the wife of a man possessing a specified voting qualification or the widow qualified under this provision during her husband's lifetime.

Under these proposals the Committee estimated the number of women who would be qualified to vote under each heading as:

(a) Own property qualification	1,929,000
(b) Literacy	1,265,000
(c) Husband's property qualification	4,306,000

But as there would be some overlapping between these voters, the total estimate as likely to be enfranchised was approximately 6,620,000.

Views of the Third Round Table Conference on Provincial Franchise.

6. We are glad to note from the Report of the third Round Table Conference of 1932 that "the general feeling" of the Conference was in favour of the proposed literacy standard for women, though some members would have preferred the same standard for both men and women. The Report further records that there was a very general difference of opinion concerning the proposal to enfranchise the wives of men qualified by property to vote for the present Provincial Councils.

We would in reply point out that this proposal of the Franchise Committee is in fact a very cautious one, and it would enfranchise considerably fewer women than the corresponding proposal by the Indian Statutory Commission. If even this moderate proposal of the Franchise Committee is dropped, the effect will be to reduce the number of women voters by more than half. Again, if the Upper Primary Standard be substituted for literacy, the effect will be to increase the disparity between men and women voters as statistics prove that *even now more boys than girls attend schools and pass tests or examinations, and there was a still greater difference in their numbers when the adults of to-day were boys and girls.*

The White Paper Proposals—Provincial Franchise.

7. Under the White Paper proposals the franchise in general for provincial legislatures will be essentially based on property supplemented by an educational qualification, common to men and women alike, and by a qualification for women in respect of property held by the husband. These educational qualifications as defined in Appendix V of the White Paper would vary considerably in the different Provinces, e.g., in Madras the educational qualification for both men and women would be literacy (ability to read or write in any language), in Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and Central Provinces, the passing of the Matriculation or School Leaving Certificate or its equivalent, in the United Provinces, Punjab and Assam "the completion of the educational course immediately below the Upper Primary Stage or its equivalent" and in the North-West Frontier Province, "in urban areas, the passing of the Middle School Examination; in rural areas, of the Upper Primary Standard; or of an examination

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accepted by the Local Government as the equivalent of either."

Under a qualification based on a public examination very few women will come on the register, particularly in Provinces, where education among women is still very backward, and where the majority of even the few educated women have, because of social custom, never been to schools, or passed examinations. It is extremely unlikely that any adult women if literate, would be allowed by social custom to sit for a public educational examination, of however low a standard, so that women already educated at home will not be qualified to vote, because they have not passed a public examination. We have no doubt therefore that if the Government proposals are adopted the proportion of women to men voters will be far lower even than the Government estimate of 1:7 and the women's vote will continue to be a negligible factor in elections in those Provinces where an educational qualification higher than bare literacy, is prescribed for women.

*Franchise for the Federal Assembly:
Proposals of the Indian Franchise
Committee.*

8. With regard to the franchise for the Assembly, the Indian Franchise Committee recommended that it should be the same for both men and women as that now in force for the Provincial Councils, supplemented by an educational qualification for both men and women. They suggested that in the case of men the educational qualification should be the possession of the Matriculation or School Leaving Certificate or its equivalent. In the case of women they stated that as education has made much less progress among them, the names of all women entered on the new Provincial Council rolls under the literacy qualification should be added to the Assembly roll. They added, however, that this proviso should apply only to the first roll of election to the Assembly, and that thereafter while the names of all these women would be retained, the qualification for the additional new women electors should be the Upper Primary Standard. They expected that under these proposals, the number of women on the electoral roll for the first Assembly would be about 1,500,000 in a total electorate of about 8,500,000.

In our opinion the Committee's proposals for women's franchise are quite inadequate and we would urge that the

franchise for the future Provincial Assemblies and for the Federal Assembly should be the same.

Views of the Third Round Table Conference on Franchise for the Federal Assembly.

9. In its chapter on the Federal Legislature, the Report of the Third Round Table Conference states that "the conference accepted generally the proposal that the franchise for the British Indian section of the future Assembly shall be the existing franchise for the Provincial Legislative Councils"—"the conference was unable to agree as regards the adoption of an educational qualification for women voters for the Federal Assembly, the same arguments as were advanced for and against the proposal in the case of the Provincial legislatures holding good in their view here also". We, too, would repeat our replies to those arguments given in para. 6 above when urging that the same special qualification of literacy should be prescribed for women for the Federal Assembly franchise also.

Franchise for the Federal Assembly recommended by the White Paper.

10. The franchise for the House of Assembly under the British Government's proposals will be for practical purposes the existing franchise for the present Provincial Legislatures supplemented by an educational qualification common to both men and women. The White Paper further states in para. 21 that "the ratio of women to men electors for the Federal Assembly will for practical purposes remain unchanged under the present proposals, although the number of women electors will be substantially increased", but it gives no figures to explain how the Government arrived at this conclusion. Under the new property qualification for the Assembly proposed by the White Paper, which is the same as that now in force for the Provincial Legislatures, the proportion of women to men voters will certainly not be higher than under the existing Assembly qualification, as both are based on property held in the voter's own right. To this property qualification for the Assembly franchise, the White Paper proposes to add an educational qualification of the Matriculation or School Final Certificate common to men and women. For reasons which we have already explained, it is obvious that far more men than women will be qualified for the franchise under

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this high educational qualification. The franchise (1932) Committee's Report (para. 409) points out that even if the Upper Primary qualification were adopted, the "number of women on the electoral roll for the Federal Assembly will be very small." The proposal of the White Paper to prescribe an educational qualification of such a high standard as the Matriculation or S. S. L. C. examination, for both men and women, will of course reduce the number of women voters for the Assembly far below the number who would be qualified were the Upper Primary qualification prescribed, and we would point out that the number of women electors who would be qualified under even this Upper Primary qualification was considered inadequate by the Franchise Committee unless this qualification was modified by the special temporary literacy qualification for women proposed by them. *The educational qualification proposed by the White Paper will therefore surely lower the ratio of women to men electors below even its present inadequate figure.*

Effect of the New Regulation on Women's Vote.

11. The White Paper further modifies the proposals of the Franchise Committee by adding a proviso that for both the Assembly and the Provincial Council electoral rolls the claimants in respect of an educational qualification or of property held by a husband will be required to make an application to be entered on the electoral roll to the Returning Officer. The Franchise Committee suggested this condition only in the case of women who were not recorded as literate in the educational records, and not of all women who would be qualified under these two special qualifications. There is no doubt that the only possible effect of this proviso must be a lowering of the number of women voters, for certain social disabilities such as purdah, seclusion, etc., under which many Indian women still labour, makes this condition much more difficult for them to fulfil than for men. We would urge therefore that this condition should not be prescribed for women and that the recommendation of the Franchise Committee on this point should be adopted as being fair and reasonable. If, however, this rule is insisted upon, we would urge that to compensate for the probability of a smaller number of women coming on the roll, the husband's property qualifications should be extended to the wives of all men qualified under the

property qualification, instead of merely to the wives of men possessing the property qualifications prescribed at present for the Provincial Councils.

Importance of adequate Women's Vote for the Federal Assembly.

12. There is one other point which we should like to emphasise. As the Federal Assembly will deal with many questions which are of particular concern to Indian women and on which the views of men and women may differ, it is essential that the members of the House of Assembly should be responsive to a large women's vote if the views of women are to have a fair chance of influencing legislation on these subjects. In view therefore of the legislative importance of the Federal Assembly to women we would repeat that women voters for that Assembly should have the same qualifications of literacy and of the husband's property qualification as recommended for them by the Indian Franchise Committee for the Provincial Assemblies.

The British Government anxious that the proportion of Women Electors should be adequate.

13. We are glad that the British Government have stated that they fully appreciate the importance of a large women's electorate and are very anxious to secure that the proportion of women electors should be adequate, and admit that further consideration of the subject may be necessary. We do most earnestly hope that the Joint Select Committee will bear this in mind, and will carefully consider the arguments we have urged for the necessity of enlarging the women's electorate both in the Provincial and in the Central Legislatures. We hope that on consideration of these arguments they will modify the Government's proposals so as to enable women to have a share in the electorate more in proportion to their number and their importance to the country.

Opinion of Women in India.

14. We are aware that certain women's organisations in India have in the past put forward objections to special voting qualifications for women; but these objections have invariably been coupled with a demand for a full and real equality of citizenship rights with men, through some form of adult franchise, directly or through groups. It would be most unfair to interpret these objections as implying that organised women in India are indifferent to their voting strength, or

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would be satisfied with a mere paper equality, resulting under a restricted franchise in an almost negligible proportion of votes. The Report of the Indian Franchise Committee shows that many of the women witnesses who gave evidence before the Committee, some of them speaking on behalf of other important organisations, anticipated that immediate adult franchise might not prove practicable, and definitely supported the qualification of literacy and of the husband's ownership of property which were subsequently recommended.

We are also aware that it has been suggested by some women that the women's electorate can be enlarged by enfranchising all women of 21 years and over, living in urban areas. We wish to state that we have no objection to the adoption of this scheme as a means of further increasing the number of women voters recommended by the Indian Franchise Committee, but we are opposed to substituting this proposal for the proposal of the Indian Franchise Committee to enfranchise the wife of a man possessing a specified property qualification, as we are sure that such a substitution will result in an unequal and unfair distribution of voting power between women in urban and in rural areas. Under the literacy qualification, far more women will come on the roll in urban than in rural areas, as education is undoubtedly more advanced in towns than in villages, and this new proposal to have adult franchise for women in urban areas, will further increase the disparity in numbers between the women voters in urban and rural areas. The women in villages are in many respects less advanced than the women in urban areas, and they specially need the stimulating effect of the franchise to awaken in them a full sense of civic responsibility. The vote therefore is of far greater importance and value to them, in educating them and in raising their status generally, than it is to the women in the urban areas. We have therefore no doubt that the substitution of this proposal for the special qualification proposed by the Indian Franchise Committee will cause grave injustice to many millions of women and retard the progress of women's advancement in our villages. Many of us, signatories of this memorandum, have lived in rural areas and are well acquainted with the conditions prevailing there and we feel it would be grossly unfair to deprive the

women in rural areas of their rightful share in the franchise and its educational and other advantages. For these reasons we strongly urge that the proposal of the Indian Franchise Committee to prescribe a special qualification for married women on husband's property qualification should not be abandoned.

The Federal Upper Chamber.

15. With regard to the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature no proposals have been made for ensuring that women will be eligible for election to this chamber. The White Paper states that "since the British Indian seats in the Upper Chamber of the Federal legislatures will be filled by indirect election by the Provincial legislatures, no question of franchise qualifications arises, though certain specific property or other qualifications will be required in members of the Upper House". (para. 20, page 6.) Under the present qualifications for election to the Council of State the number of women who would be qualified to stand is infinitesimal, and we would urge that if these qualifications are to be continued for the new Federal Upper Chamber, some modification in them should be made for women candidates.

In this connection it is illuminating to note that in spite of a strong demand from women, the Council of State has not yet extended the right to vote or stand for election, even to those few women who possess these high qualifications. As practical experience on legislative measures affecting women has also shown that this body is reactionary in its attitude to women, we are naturally anxious that the qualifications to serve on this body should be modified as to make it possible for an adequate number of women to be eligible for election.

Summary of our Recommendations.

16. We would summarise our demands by urging with all the force at our command, that if the Joint Select Committee finds itself unable to recommend any form of adult suffrage, it may at least not ask the women of India to be satisfied with anything less than the measure of franchise rights for the Provincial Assemblies recommended for them in the Report of the Indian Franchise Committee of 1932; and because of the special legislative importance of the Federal Assembly to women we would urge that the women's electorate for that body should not be less than a third of

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the total electorate. We are convinced that nothing less than this measure of franchise will be fair or just to the women in India, considering their numbers and importance in the country.

Conclusion.

17. In conclusion we would respectfully urge that the consideration of the question of women's franchise be not postponed or left to be dealt with by the Central and Provincial Governments or legislatures at some future and uncertain date. We request that the claims of women be examined at the same time as those of the rest of India and before the Bill for the new Indian Constitution be finally drafted and presented to Parliament.

Signed by the following—

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- Miss Eleanor McDougall, M.A., D.Litt., Principal, Women's Christian College, Madras.
- Mrs. Krishna Menon, c/o Dr. Krishna Menon, Salem.
- Miss D. J. Stephens, St. Andrews House, Kilpauk, Madras.
- Mrs. D. Brito, Landholder, Mangalore.
- Mrs. N. Rama Rao, Shivabagh, Mangalore.
- Zamindarni, Goundampalyam, Salem Dt.
- Mrs. A. J. Lobo, Hon. Presy. Magistrate, San Thome, Madras.
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- Shrimati S. Rajamani Ammal, Board Girls' School, Dharmapuri.
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- Shrimati T. Ramadevi Ammal, Ramarowpet, Cocanada.
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[Continued.]

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- Mrs. C. Krishnaswamy Pillai, c/o Civil Assistant Surgeon, Virudhunagar.
- Mrs. V. V. Ramaswami, c/o Chairman, Municipal Council, Virudhunagar.
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Mrs. P. John Joseph, C.M.S. Parsonage, Virudhunagar.
Shrimathi Gomathi Ammal, Veterinary Hospital, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. R. Sivagami Ammal, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. Avudai Ammal, Virudhunagar.
- Mrs. Nagarathnam Ammal, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. Valli Ammal, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. Palani Ammal, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. K. Amirtham Ammal, Member, Women's Association, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. R. Sithalakshmi, Member, Women's Association, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. Thirunavukkarasi, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. A. Annamalai, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. Avudaitangam, Virudhunagar.
Mrs. A. M. Bedford, Sundar Iyer's Street, Chittoor.
Shrimathi M. Indirani Ammal, c/o M. Ranagaswamy Iyengar, Vakil, Chittoor.
Mrs. Chengal Row, Surya Vilas, Chittoor.
Shrimathi M. Subbarathnamma, No. 1, Sundaraier Street, Chittoor.
Shrimathi G. Parvathi Ammal, No. 2, Sundaraier Street, Chittoor.
Mrs. E. Kalappa, Surya Vilas, Chittoor.
Mrs. K. Singh, c/o Mr. K. Singh, Chittoor.
Mrs. E. Krishnamurthi, Surya Vilas, Chittoor.
Miss A. V. Easter, Teacher, B. T. Compound, Chittoor.
Mrs. Nawamonie Paul, Chittoor.
Shrimati G. N. Saradha, B.A., L.T., Chittoor.
Shrimati Manchu Bashini Ammal, c/o C. Venkataramana Iyer, Advocate, Chittoor.
Mrs. S. B. Tambe, M.L.C., Member, Provincial Franchise Committee, Nagpur, Central Provinces.
Shrimati C. R. Jegathambal, President, Women's Association, Villupuram.
Mrs. Streenivasa Raghavachari, c/o Streenivasa Raghavachari, B.A., L.T., 1st Assistant, High School, Villupuram.
Mrs. Arumuga Mudaliar, c/o Mr. Arumuga Mudaliar, Vice-President, Taluk Board, Villupuram.
Shrimati Sitalakshmi Ammal, c/o Dy. Superintendent of Police, Villupuram.
Mrs. Manickam, c/o Dr. Manickam Pillai, Villupuram.
Shrimati Saraswathi Ammal, c/o The Headmaster, High School, Villupuram.
Shrimathi Rukmani Ammal, Secretary, Women's Association, Villupuram.
Mrs. Venkatesa Aiyar, c/o Mr. P. S. Venkatesa Aiyer, Pleader, Villupuram.
Mrs. Sambamurthy Aiyar, c/o Sambamurthy Aiyar, Strotriamdar of Kakuppam, Villupuram.
Mrs. Gundu Rao, c/o U. Gundu Rao, B.A., Pleader, Villupuram.

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[Continued.]

- Mrs. Ranganatha Iyengar, c/o V. Ranganatha Iyengar, Pleader, Villupuram.
- Shrimati Ponnurengam Ammal, Lady Doctor, Villupuram.
- Mrs. Ebenezer, c/o S. J. Ebenezer, Sub-Magistrate, Villupuram.
- Mrs. G. V. Desikan, c/o G. V. Desikan, B.A., B.L., Vakil, Villupuram.
- Shrimati Thiruvani Bai, Member, Ladies' Club, Villupuram.
- Shrimati R. Lakshmi Bai, Mistress, Taluk Board School, Villupuram.
- Shrimati Paripurani Ammal, Medical Hall, Anandasramam, Villupuram.
- Shrimati Kamala Bai, Member, Ladies' Club, Villupuram.
- Shrimati Rajambal, Member, Ladies' Club, Villupuram.
- Shrimati Nachiar Ammal, Member, Ladies' Club, Villupuram.
- Shrimathi Padmavathi Ammal, c/o Sanitary Inspector, Villupuram.
- Mrs. Muhamed Khan, c/o Mr. Khan Muhamed Khan Bahadur, First Class Magistrate, Villupuram.
- Mrs. B. A. Jaganatha Mudaliar, c/o Mr. B. A. Jaganatha Mudaliar, Villupuram.
- Miss Olivia De Cumhe, Vice-President, Women Graduates' Union, Bombay.
- C/o H. H. The Prince of Arcot, Amir Mahal, Madras.
- C/o H. H. The Prince of Arcot, Amir Mahal, Madras.
- Begum Humayun Mirza, San Thome, Madras.
- Mrs. Yakub Hasan, c/o Yakub Hasan, M.L.C., Madras.
- Begum Hamid Khan, c/o Hamid Khan, M.L.C., Madras.
- Begum Azeem, c/o M. A. Azeem, Bar-at-Law, Judge, Court of Small Causes, Madras.
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- Mrs. S. Ananda Bai, President, Mahila Sabha, New Court Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Parvathi Bai Manjeshwar, Secretary, H. V. Mandal, Mangalore.
- Shrimati P. Leela Bai, Court Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Singavajjala Sangamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavary Dt.
- Shrimati P. Rama Bai, Court Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimathi H. Sithamma Garu, Goods Shed View, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Jajala Sangamma, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati H. Sarojini Bai, Goods Shed View, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Ganga Bai Kelkar, Kadri, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Jajala Parvathamma, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati A. Manorama Bai, Falnir, Mangalore.
- Shrimati K. S. Shantha Bai, I. M. Sevashram, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Krishnavenamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati Saroj Bai Nivas, Kshema Vilas, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimati M. Sundari Ammal, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimati M. Chandravathi Bai, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimati P. Sita Devi, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimati C. Kameswaramma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati A. Kalyani Bai, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Koorella Lakshamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati B. Devaki Bai, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimati N. Devi Bai, Attavar, Mangalore.
- Shrimathi Jajala Seethamma, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati N. Sundari Bai, c/o N. G. Suvarna, Old Rent Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Sulochani Bai, Old Rent Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati A. Seethamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimathi M. Leelavathi Bai, Sea View, Court Hill, Mangalore.
- Shrimathi Parvathi Bai, New Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimathi V. Bashkaramma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati E. Peralakshmi Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Mrs. M. Parvathi Bai, c/o M. Shanker Rao, Vakil Mangalore.
- Shrimati K. Varya Bai, c/o K. Devadasa Nayak, Vakil, Mangalore.
- Shrimati K. Mukta Bai, c/o K. Appaji Rao, Sturrock Road, Mangalore.
- Miss F. M. Saldanha, "Sundar Bagh," Falnir, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Kalidasu Krishnamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari District.
- Shrimati Y. Hanumayamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Mrs. J. H. Saldanha, Falnir, Mangalore.
- Mrs. Winnie Vas, Belmont House, Mangalore.
- Shrimati U. Chandranana Bai, c/o Ullal Sanjiva Rao, Sanyasigudda Mangalore.
- Shrimati U. Bhavani Bai, c/o Ullal Gopal Naik, Sunyasigudda, Mangalore.

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- Shrimati U. Sitha Bai, c/o U. Shantharam Rao Sunyasigudda, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Y. Ramayamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati Y. Prasanna Ramayamma, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati S. Lakshmiramakamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati Nagar Kalyani Bai, Sunyasigudda, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Swarnamba, Rama Vilas, Civil Lines, Bellary.
- Shrimati Sreepadha Seshamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati V. Dhora Venkamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati K. Saraswathi Ammal, Rama Vilas, Civil Lines, Bellary.
- Shrimati T. Rajamma Garu, c/o Dr. J. Narasimhalu, Bellary.
- Shrimati G. Adi Lakshmi, No. 2, Sundarier Street, Chittoor.
- Shrimati Sivudu Seethamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimathi R. Mahalakshmi Ammal, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati Chitteri Venkatarathamma, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati Sagaram Somidhavamma Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati A. Soolochana Bai, c/o R. Rama Rao, Chittoor.
- Shrimati Lakmanarasamma Garu, c/o I. Sheshagiri Rao, B.A., B.L., Pleader, Chittoor.
- Mrs. J. S. Kannappar, c/o J. S. Kannappar, Editor, "India," Madras.
- Shrimati Koraprolu Rangamma Garu, Member, Taluk Board, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati Sagaram Vijayalakshmi Garu, Kovur, West Godavari Dt.
- Shrimati P. Mangamma Garu, Gadhi Vari Street, Berhampore.
- Shrimati G. Savitri Ammal, Girls' High School, Berhampore, Ganjam.
- Shrimati M. Suramma Garu, c/o M. Seetha Ramaswami Garu, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Berhampore.
- Shrimati N. L. Kanthamma Garu, Cokavari Street, Berhampore.
- Shrimati B. Alamamma Garu, c/o B. Narasimham Garu, Doctor, Berhampore.
- Shrimati B. Seshamma Garu, c/o B. Mukunda Rao Naidu Garu, Berhampore.
- Shrimati I. Narayanamma Garu, c/o B. Mukunda Rao Naidu Garu, Berhampore.
- Shrimati V. Janakiamma, c/o V. V. Menon, Military Lines, Berhampore, Ganjam.
- Shrimati W. V. Satyanarayanamma Garu, c/o W. V. Sarma Garu, New Military Lines, Berhampore.
- Shrimati W. V. Surya Bai, c/o W. V. G. K. Gokhale, New Military Lines, Berhampore.
- Shrimati G. Sivakanathamma Garu, Member, Berhampore Municipal Council, Berhampore.
- Begum Ahmed Ali Sahiba, c/o Ahmed Ali Sahib Bahadur, Collector, Ranipet.
- Begum Mohamad Ali Sahiba, c/o Mohamed Ali Sahib Bahadur, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Marshalls Road, Egmore, Madras.
- Begum Jameel, c/o M. S. M. Jameel Sahiba Bahadur, Currency Officer, 6, Monteith Road, Egmore.
- Begum Noorullah Sahiba, c/o Noorullah Sahib Bahadur, Police Quarters, Teynampet.
- Kubra Begum Sahiba, Joint Secretary to the Madras Presidency Muslim Ladies' Association, Madras.
- Thahara Begum Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Thruvatiswaranpet.
- Rahmatt Unissa Begum Sahiba, Supervisor, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Madras & Hon. Secretary & Treasurer to the Madras Presidency Muslim Ladies' Association, Madras.
- Mrs. M. A. Wahab Sahib Bahadur, Merchant, "Manga Mundi," Triplicane.
- Khader Unissa Begum, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Thousand Lights, Teynampet.
- Rahim Bi Bi Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Angappa Naick St., George Town, Madras.
- Ameena Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Khader Bi Bi Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Pudupet, Madras.
- Fathim Unissa Begum Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Malifus Khan Garden, George Town, Madras.
- Mohamad Unissa Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Angappa Naick Street, G. T., Madras.
- Munuwen Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Thousand Lights, Teynampet.
- B. Khader Unissa Be Sahiba, Asst., Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Thousand Lights, Madras.
- Jani Begum Sahiba, Asst., Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Thousand Lights, Teynampet.

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- Razia Begum Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Obran Bi Bi Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Peter's Road, Madras.
- Khasim Bi Bi Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Mylapore.
- Rahmani Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Mylapore.
- Asha Bi Bi Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Mylapore.
- Kaiz Fathima Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Mylapore.
- Rahmatt Unissa Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Shazadi Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Rasool Bi Bi Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Ameena Bi Bi Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Haleema Bi Bi Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girl's School, Chepauk.
- Safia Begum Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Chepauk.
- Rahmatt Unissa Be Sahiba, Head Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Perambur.
- Ahmaeli Begum Sahiba, Religious Mistress, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Thousand Lights.
- Krusheed Bi Bi Sahiba, Assistant, Corporation Muslim Girls' School, Mylapore.
- Shrimati Y. Sumitra Bai, Sanyasigudde, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Rajalakshmi R. Achar, Kadri Road, Mangalore.
- Mrs. Ramachandra Ayyar, Planter's Lane, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Y. Sumitra Bai, Sanyasigudde, Mangalore.
- Shrimati K. Ratna Bai, Kadri Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati M. Ahalya Bai, Court Hill, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Seeta Bai, Court Hill, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Nagar Sita Bai, c/o Nagar Ramanath Shenoy, Merchant and Municipal Councillor, Mangalore.
- Shrimati B. Girija Bai, Court Hill, Mangalore.
- Shrimati K. Radha Bai, c/o K. Appaya Shanbhogue, Car Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimati T. Sundari Bai, New Field Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimati B. Uma Bai, c/o V. N. Bijur, Dongerkerry, Mangalore.
- Mrs. V. R. Kamath, c/o V. R. Kamath, LL.B., Vakil, Kodialbail, S. K.
- Shrimati K. Lakshmi Bai, Dangais' Garden, Dongerkerry Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimati G. Susheela Bai, Kalyan Bhavan, Court Road, Mangalore.
- Mrs. Uma Bai Baidur, c/o Anantha Rao, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Balmatta Road, Mangalore.
- Mrs. C. F. Lasrado, 1st Class Bench Magistrate, 15, Falmir Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati U. Sita Bai, Teacher, Municipal Girls' School, Car Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimati U. Mira Bai, c/o Ullal Narahari Bhat, Ganapathy Temple Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimati Maithrajini Bai, c/o M. S. Krishna Rao, Auditor, Coelho Street, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Indira Bai, c/o S. Raghunath Rao, B.A., L.T., Kodialbail, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Sundari, c/o S. Raghunath Rao, B.A., L.T., Kodialbail, Mangalore.
- Shrimati M. Lilabai, New Court Road, Mangalore.
- Shrimati M. Kamala Bai, Devi Vilas, Pentlandpet, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Rohini, c/o S. Raghunath Rao, B.A., L.T., Kodialbail, Mangalore.
- Shrimati P. Sundari Bai, c/o Rao Saheb H. M. Kamath, Pentlandpet, Mangalore.
- Shrimati N. Sundamma Nellikai, c/o Rao Saheb N. Venkat Rao, Manohar Vilas, Mangalore.
- Shrimati S. Parvathi, c/o S. Raghunath Rao, B.A., L.T., Kodialbail, Mangalore.
- Mrs. John Samuel, St. Patrick's Church, Tuticorin.
- Mrs. D. Gnanam, Church Street, Tuticorin.
- Mrs. J. Motilal, Great Cotton Road, Tuticorin.
- Mrs. M. Roche Victoria, "Sukhastan," Beach Road, Tuticorin.
- Mrs. A. Jacob, Victoria Extension Road, Tuticorin.
- Mrs. U. Jacob, Victoria Extension Road, Tuticorin.
- Mrs. Selvan Lazarus, S. P. G. Shunmugapuram, Tuticorin.

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Mrs. M. Arulammal, Machado Compound, Sivan Koil, Tuticorin.
 Mrs. Arthur, North Cotton Road, Tuticorin.
 Mrs. Lily Thangiah, Chatram Street, Tuticorin.

Mrs. K. Joseph, North Cotton Road, Tuticorin.
 10, Appa Mudaly Street, Madras.
 1, Begum Sahib Street, Royapettah, Madras.
 Kahmur Unissa Begum, 31/32, Peters' Road, Madras.

MEMORANDUM 43. ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS AFFECTING THE STATUS AND WELFARE OF INDIAN WOMEN IN THE FUTURE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, HANDED IN BY MRS. P. K. SEN.

Introduction.

1. We, the undersigned, women members of local bodies, such as Municipalities, District Boards and Taluk Boards, desire to present this Memorandum to you, and request you to give it special consideration as coming from women who have all had experience of standing for election and of serving on public administrative bodies. We have had personal practical experience of the difficulties which confront women standing for election under a franchise principally based on property qualifications, and in which, though franchise qualifications are the same for men and women voters, the proportion of men to women voters is about 6:1 in Municipalities and 8:1 in District Boards.

Experience of Election to existing Local Bodies:

2. We would point out that our experience in elections is of special interest as we have all stood for election under the Local Bodies Act of 1930, by which any taxpayer of however small an amount is qualified to vote. (Sec. 45, Madras District Municipalities Act and Schedule III to the Madras Local Boards Act, 1930.) We have therefore had practical experience in advance of how franchise based on a low property qualification and given on equal terms to men and women would affect women candidates if unmodified by any additional special qualifications for women voters. Before 1932 the only women on local bodies were women members nominated by Government, and we would point out that their work was so much appreciated, that when nominated seats on local bodies were abolished by the New Acts which came into force in 1932, these bodies recommended that under the provisions of these Acts, seats should be reserved for women. There are now over 200 women on local bodies in the Madras Presidency, sitting on Municipalities, District Boards and

Taluk Boards, but almost all of them have been returned for seats reserved for women. From figures that are available now we learn that out of these 200 women on local bodies only one woman has been returned for a general and unreserved constituency in a Municipality, and one woman for a District Board general and unreserved constituency. These figures speak for themselves with regard to the chances women would have, of being elected for general unreserved constituencies on a franchise nominally equal for both men and women voters, and comment is almost superfluous.

3. We would, however, point out that the presence of these women on local bodies shows the keen interest women are taking in local affairs and that this interest has even spread to the villages, which are usually regarded as the stronghold of conservatism with regard to women. We have now elected women members on several Taluk Boards, these women members being usually women residing in Taluk areas and not outsiders. The existence of women members on Taluk Boards, is especially interesting, as prior to 1932 there were no nominated women members on Taluk Boards as there were on Municipal Councils and on District Boards. It shows that the work of the nominated women members on the old Municipalities and District Boards has encouraged women in the villages to stand for election to Taluk Boards under the provision of the new Act. (Sec. 9 (2), Madras Local Boards Act of 1930.)

Opposition to postponement of consideration of qualifications for women's franchise.

4. Before we go on to deal with the special franchise qualifications for women which we support, we should like to deal with the general argument that this question of women's franchise be postponed and left to the Central and Pro-

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vincial Legislatures to deal with at some future and uncertain date. We are emphatically opposed to this suggestion as we consider that the claims of India's women to political status and rights should be dealt with at the same time as those of the rest of India, and before the Bill for the New Indian Constitution is finally drafted and presented to Parliament. The new Central and Provincial legislatures will have many pressing questions to deal with, and the questions affecting women and their status will be crowded out, unless candidates for election are responsible to a women's vote too considerable for them to dare to ignore it, but the women's vote under the present nominally equal franchise is 1:10 in our province of Madras, and is very much lower in other provinces, e.g., in Assam it is 1:114 (para. 204, Chap. VIII, Report of Indian Franchise Committee).

Special franchise qualifications for women supported in this Memorandum.

5. These general considerations therefore make us support the special franchise qualifications for women proposed by the Indian Franchise (Lothian) Committee for the Provincial Councils.

(a) an educational qualification of bare literacy for women.

(b) being the wife of a man who possesses the property qualification prescribed for the existing councils.

The Committee estimated that under these proposals the number of women enfranchised would be approximately:—

(a) Own property qualification	1,929,000
(b) Literacy qualification	1,265,000
(c) Husband's property qualification	4,306,000

As there would be some overlapping between the voters qualified under these different heads, they estimated the total number of women voters as approximately 6,620,000. These proposals would nowhere result in a higher proportion of women to men voters than as 1:4 and in some provinces such as Bihar and Orissa the proportion would be only as 1:9 and we cannot think this anything but a modest proportion considering that the total adult populations of men and women are about equal. If these special qualifications of literacy and of the husband's vote are not adopted the proportion of women to men voters would be only as 1:11 in this province and considerably smaller in other provinces. We wish, therefore, to emphasise the very

great importance to women of those special franchise qualifications as proposed by the Indian Franchise Committee, and to state that we will be content with no proposals which enfranchise a smaller proportion of women.

Suggested enfranchisement of all women over 21 in urban areas.

6. We are aware of the suggestion made by some women's organisations to increase the women's vote, by enfranchising all women of twenty-one and over living in urban areas. We would have no objection to this scheme were it in addition to the special qualification for women of the husband's property qualification recommended by the Indian Franchise Committee and the White Paper; but we understand that this enfranchisement of urban women voters has been suggested as a substitute for the husband's property qualification, and to such a substitution we are totally opposed, as it must result in an unequal and unfair distribution of voting strength between women in urban and in rural areas. As education is more advanced in urban than in rural areas, more women will come on the electoral rolls under the literacy qualification in urban than in rural areas. To this literacy qualification which itself favours women in urban areas, it is proposed to add a special qualification giving adult franchise to women in towns, a qualification which will only benefit women in urban areas, while at the same time abandoning the husband's property qualification which would have enfranchised women in rural as well as in urban areas. All students of Indian Economics and Politics have emphasised that India is predominantly an agricultural country and that nearly 90 per cent. of her people live in villages, and therefore to give adult suffrage to the 10 per cent. of women who live in towns, while giving only a property qualification in her own regard and a literacy qualification to the 90 per cent. of women who live in villages, would be manifestly unfair and injurious to the interests of Indian women as a whole. As the women in villages are educationally and socially more backward than the women in urban areas, the vote is of greater educative importance to them than to women in urban areas, and they need the stimulus of the franchise to awaken them from their present state of civic inertia and to raise their general status. It is, moreover, especially in rural areas, that the

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pressure of an adequate women's vote is needed to increase the provision of facilities for education and medical help and generally to improve the social conditions of life for women in villages. We have no doubt, therefore, that the substitution of this proposal of adult suffrage for women in urban areas in place of the husband's property qualification would cause grave injustice to many millions of Indian women, and retard the progress of women's advancement in the villages. We, the signatories of this Memorandum, have many of us lived in rural areas, and are well acquainted with the conditions prevailing there, and we feel strongly that it would be most unfair to deprive the women in villages of their share in the voting strength of the country, by substituting for the special qualification of husband's property qualification, a special qualification enfranchising women only in towns, because of the personal and theoretic objections, however genuinely held, of a few women to the married women's qualification. We feel that their objections take no account of the actual practical conditions prevailing in Indian villages. We state with full confidence and a real knowledge of rural conditions that women in rural areas have no such objections to a vote on the husband's qualification, and consider that at the present time and under the present circumstances in Indian villages it would be regarded as quite fair and in no way derogatory to women. For these reasons we most strongly urge that the proposal of the Indian Franchise Committee of the special qualification for women on husband's property qualification should not be abandoned.

White Paper Proposals for Women's Franchise for the Provincial Councils.

7. Under the proposals of the British Government in the White Paper of March, 1933, the franchise in general for Provincial legislatures will be "essentially based on property supplemented by an educational qualification common to men and women alike and by a qualification for women in respect of property held by the husband." The Government estimate that under these qualifications the ratio of women to men voters will be approximately 1:7 but they do not give any figures or state reasons for arriving at this ratio. Their proposals for women's franchise differ from those of the Indian Franchise Committee with regard to the educational qualification. The White Paper recommends

the same educational qualification for men and women, and that qualification is a very high one in some provinces, e.g., in Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Central Provinces where the passing of the Matriculation or School Leaving Certificate or its equivalent is the qualification prescribed. Therefore the women who in these provinces will come on the electoral roll under the educational qualification will be very few, far less in number than the men. We would point out that even now many more boys than girls go to school and pass examinations, and this was still more the case when the adults of to-day were boys and girls. We have, therefore, no doubt that if the proposals of the White Paper are adopted the proportion of women to men voters for Provincial Assemblies will be far lower than the Government estimate of 1:7 a ratio which is not fair or just to the women, considering their numbers and importance in the country.

White Paper Proposals for Women's Franchise for the Assembly.

8. The franchise for the House of Assembly of the Federal Legislature under the White Paper proposals will be for practical purposes the existing franchise for the present Provincial legislatures, a franchise essentially based on property. The Government propose that this qualification should be supplemented by an educational qualification common to men and women. They state that under these qualifications "the ratio of women to men electors for the Federal Assembly will for practical purposes remain unchanged although the number of women electors will be substantially increased." Here again no figures are given to explain how this ratio was arrived at. The property qualification proposed by the White Paper for the Federal Assembly is the same as that proposed by the Indian Franchise Committee, but while the Committee recommended literacy as the educational qualification for women the White Paper recommends the possession of the Matriculation Certificate or its equivalent examination as the educational qualification for both men and women alike. Statistics show that there will be only about 315,651 women voters and 6,792,821 men voters under the proposed property qualification for the Federal Assembly (Table in Chapter VII, Report of Indian Franchise Committee). The Indian Franchise Committee rejected the idea of the immediate introduction of even the Upper Primary Standard as the

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educational qualification for women as the number of women who would come on the electoral roll would be very small, and advocated bare literacy as the educational qualification for them for the first election to the Federal Assembly. (Chapter XX, para. 409.) The number of women voters will surely be smaller still when the educational qualification is as high as the Matriculation Standard. We would refer to the remarks of the Education Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission (Chap. VII, para. 7 of their Report) that the disparity and the growing disparity between the figures for boys and girls increases as we go up the educational ladder and that the number of boys in the high school stage (preparing for matriculation) is 34 times as great as the number of girls. This high educational qualification will, therefore, surely lower the ratio of women to men electors below even its present inadequate figure.

White Paper Proposal for Application to the Returning Officer.

9. The White Paper further modifies the proposals of the Indian Franchise Committee by adding a proviso that the claimants in respect of an educational qualification, or of property held by a husband, will be required to make application to be entered on the electoral roll to the Returning Officer. The Indian Franchise Committee suggested this condition *only* in the case of women who were not recorded as literate in the educational records, and not of *all* women who would be qualified under these special qualifications. The exact effect of this proposal of the White Paper cannot be measured now, but we fear that numerically it will be very serious indeed. One of the main reasons for this fear is that under existing social conditions in India this proviso will press more severely on women than it would on men voters for social disabilities such as purdah may make it difficult for qualified women voters to fulfil this condition. Also women qualified to vote may not realise until too late that under this new regulation they are obliged to make an application to the Returning Officer before their names are entered on the register. The only effect of this proviso must be to decrease the women's vote and lower its proportion compared to that of men and thus to diminish the effect of the special qualifications for women devised in order to mitigate the present disparity in numbers between men and women voters. We would urge,

therefore, that this condition should not be prescribed for women, and that the recommendation of the Indian Franchise Committee on this point should be adopted as being fair and reasonable. If, however, this proviso is insisted upon, we would urge that to compensate for the probability of a smaller number of women coming on the roll, the husband's property qualification should be extended to the wives of *all* men qualified under the future property qualification, instead of merely to the wives of men possessing the property qualifications prescribed *at present* for the provincial councils.

Special Importance of Assembly Franchise to Women.

10. We would like to emphasise that though the White Paper contains provision for reservation of seats for women for the Assembly, this reservation of seats should not be considered as in any way a substitute for a women's vote large enough to demand consideration from candidates for the Assembly. Questions such as marriage and divorce, adoption, custody and guardianship of minors, wills and succession, will under the proposals of the White Paper be concurrent subjects for Provincial and Central legislation. As these are questions on which the views of men and women may differ, it is essential that the members of the House of Assembly, should be responsive to a large women's vote, if the views of women are to have a fair chance of influencing legislation on these subjects—subjects which all will agree are of the most vital and particular concern to Indian women. The attention that these questions are likely to receive unless there is an adequate women's vote was demonstrated when a motion for the reference to a Select Committee of a bill to secure a share for Hindu widows in their husband's family property was negatived by the legislative Assembly on 4th February, 1932. Other similar instances can be given, and had the members of the Assembly been answerable to a large women's vote such neglect of questions of peculiar importance to women would not have occurred. In view therefore of the special importance of the women's vote for the Federal Assembly, we would urge that women should have for that Assembly the same qualifications of literacy and of the husband's property qualification as recommended by the Indian Franchise Committee for the Provincial franchise.

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[Continued.]

Hope that Joint Select Committee may modify White Paper Proposals for Women's Franchise.

11. We are glad that the British Government have clearly stated that they "fully appreciate the importance of a large women's electorate and are very anxious to secure that the proportion of women electors should be adequate" and admit that further consideration of the subject may be necessary. We do most earnestly hope that the Joint Select Committee will bear this in mind and that on careful consideration of the arguments we have urged for the necessity of enlarging the women's electorate, they will revise the Government's proposals so as to enable women to have a share in both the Federal and Provincial electorates more in proportion to their number and their importance to the country.

12. We are aware that under adult suffrage the proportion of men and women voters would be fair and just but we do not consider it probable that adult franchise will be introduced at once owing to administrative difficulties. We, therefore, urge most strongly that if the Joint Select Committee are unable to recommend any form of adult suffrage, they will not ask the women of India to be satisfied with any smaller measure of franchise than that recommended for them by the Indian Franchise Committee for the Provincial legislatures; while in view of the special importance of the women's vote for the Federal Assembly we would respectfully and with all the vehemence at our command, urge that nothing less than one-third of the total voting strength for that Assembly will be fair or just to women. We have made a careful study of the subject and feel convinced that anything less than the franchise we have demanded will fail to make the women's vote an effective factor in elections.

Eligibility of Women Candidates for Election to the Upper Chamber of Federal Legislature.

13. With regard to the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature no definite proposals have yet been made for ensuring that women will be eligible for election to this body. The White Paper states "since the British Indian seats in the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature will be filled by indirect election by the Provincial legislatures, no question of franchise qualifications arises though certain specific property or other

qualifications will be required in members". Under the present qualification for election to the Council of State the number of women who would be qualified to stand is infinitesimal, and we would urge that if these qualifications are to be continued for the new Federal Upper Chamber, some modification in them should be made for women candidates. If new qualifications are to be prescribed we would urge that these new qualifications should be such as to secure the eligibility of a considerable number of women as candidates.

In this connection we would draw attention to the significant fact that in spite of a strong demand from women, the Council of State has not yet extended the right to vote or stand for election even to those few women who possess the existing high qualifications. As practical experience on legislative measures affecting women has shown that this body is extremely reactionary in its attitude to women we are naturally anxious that the qualifications to serve on this body should be such as to make it possible for educated women to stand for election.

Statutory Declaration of Women's Equality in Civic Rights.

14. This disability brings home to us the importance of a Statutory declaration safeguarding women from disabilities imposed on them as women in the exercise of civic rights, and we would urge that a clause stating that men and women have fundamentally the same rights and duties as citizens, should be embodied in our new constitution.

Summary.

15. We would summarise the proposals we urge as follows:—

(1) That the consideration of the question of the political status of women under the new Indian Constitution should not be postponed or left to be dealt with by the future legislatures or Government; and that the claims of women should be examined at the same time as those of the rest of India and before the Bill for the new Indian Constitution is finally drafted and presented to Parliament (Para. 4 of this memo.).

(2) That a clause should be inserted in the new Constitution safeguarding women from disabilities imposed on them as women in the exercise of civic rights (Para. 14 of this memo.).

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[Continued.]

(3) With regard to women's franchise we would urge:—

(a) For the Provincial Assemblies:

(1) Property and educational qualifications the same as men.

(2) Special literacy qualification of bare literacy.

(3) Special qualification of being the wife of a man having a specific property qualification. A woman once placed on the roll in respect of this qualification to continue to be on the roll during widowhood.

Note.—In these we support the recommendations of the Indian Franchise Committee and declare that we will be content with no smaller proportion of women voters than they have recommended.

(Paras. 5, 6 and 7 of this memo.)

(b) For the Federal Assembly:

(1) The same property and educational qualification as for men.

(2) and (3) The same special qualifications for women as those proposed for the Provincial Assemblies and stated above.

Note.—For reasons already explained and in view of the special importance of an effective women's vote for this Assembly, our proposals differ from the more restricted franchise recommended for women by the Franchise Committee (Paras. 8 and 10 of this memo.).

Note on (a) and (b): With regard to the special qualifications for (a) and (b) we would draw your attention to Para. 9 of this memorandum.

(c) For the Upper Chamber:

The qualifications should be such as to secure the eligibility of considerable number of educated women (Para. 13 of this memo.).

16. In conclusion we wish to state respectfully that our experience as members of Local Bodies and our experience of elections, has impressed on us the necessity of an adequate women's vote, if questions affecting women are to have given to them the attention their importance to the country demands. We have, therefore, felt impelled to present this Memorandum embodying our views on women's franchise, and we are confident that you will attach the greater weight

to our views because we have had practical experience of administrative work on Local Bodies.

Signed by the following:—

C. L. Narasamma Garu, Anantapur District Board, Anantapur.

Hatti Pillamma Garu, Taluk Board, Dharmavaram.

Venkata Narasamma Garu, Taluk Board, Kadiri.

Kanniammal, North Arcot District Board, Vellore.

Balambal, North Arcot District Board, Vellore.

Muniammal, Taluk Board, Gudiyatham.

Mrs. Julia Nathaniel, Taluk Board, Vellore.

Muniammal, Municipal Council, Vellore.

Mrs. J. Nathaniel, Member, Secondary Education Board, Municipal Council, Vellore.

Krishnaveni Ammal, South Arcot District Board, Cuddalore.

C. Amirthammal, South Arcot District Board, Cuddalore.

Ethirajammal, Taluk Board, Kallakurichi.

Krishnaveni Ammal, Taluk Board, Villupuram.

R. Pattammal, Taluk Board, Tirukoyilur.

Navanitha Ammal, Taluk Board, Vridachalam.

Mrs. M. E. Feriero, Medical Practitioner, Municipal Council, Cuddalore.

Krishnaveni Ammal, Municipal Council, Villupuram.

M. Sundari Adappa, South Canara District Board, Mangalore.

Shambhavi R. Punja, B.A., Secretary, Mahila Sabha, Member, District Educational Council, South Canara District Board, Mangalore.

N. Lalitabai Subbarao, Vice President, Mahila Sabha, and Depressed Classes Mission, Member, District Educational Council, Municipal Council, Mangalore.

Lazarammal, Chingleput District Board, Chingleput.

Bhagirathi Sri Ram, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chingleput District Board, Chingleput.

S. Rajarathnam, Taluk Board, Chingleput.

C. Kannammal, Taluk Board, Conjeevaram.

Kuppammal, Taluk Board, Tiruvallur.

Mrs. Benny, Taluk Board, Saidapet.

L. Subbalaksmi, Municipal Council, Saidapet.

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[Continued.]

- Mrs. Rajarathnam, Municipal Council, Chingleput.
- D. Lakshmi Gurumurthi, B.A., Chittoor District Board, Chittoor.
- Mrs. A. M. Bedford, Chittoor District Board, Chittoor.
- V. Pappamma, Taluk Board, Madanapalle.
- K. Peddamuneamma, Taluk Board, Puttur.
- T. Chinnammal, Taluk Board, Tiruttani.
- Mrs. A. M. Bedford, Registered Medical Practitioner, Taluk Board, Chittoor.
- Muthammal, Coimbatore District Board, Coimbatore.
- C. Pappammal, Taluk Board, Palladam.
- K. Rathinam, Taluk Board, Bhavani.
- K. B. Sundarambal, Taluk Board, Erode.
- C. Pappammal, Municipal Council, Tiruppur.
- Ranganaikamma, Pakkala, Ganjam District Board, Berhampore.
- G. Sivakantamma, Municipal Council, Berhampore.
- P. Sowbhagyavatamma, Member, District Educational Council, Municipal Council, Berhampore.
- V. Sundaramma, Stamp-Vendor, Municipal Council, Chicacole.
- P. Ranganayakamma, Taluk Board, Berhampore.
- A. Venkataramanamma, Taluk Board, Razole.
- D. Pushpalavaneeyamma, Taluk Board, Rajahmundry.
- J. Purushotham, Taluk Board, Tuni.
- Damaraju Lakshamma, West Godavari District Board, Ellore.
- K. Ramayamma, Taluk Board, Kovvur.
- Annamma Gandham, Taluk Board, Ongole.
- K. Annapurnamma, Taluk Board, Bapatla.
- G. Nagamani, Municipal Council, Chirala.
- T. Seethamma, Municipal Council, Masulipatam.
- Srimathi Kaveri Ammal, Madura District Board, Madura.
- Mary Kanakammal, Madura District Board, Madura.
- M. Kaveri Ammal, Taluk Board, Dindigul.
- Subbammal, Taluk Board, Madura.
- M. Kaveri Ammal, Municipal Council, Dindigul.
- A. K. Ammalu Amma, Malabar District Board, Calicut.
- Satyabama Kunchi Amma, Malabar District Board, Calicut.
- M. A. Lakshmy, Taluk Board, Chirakkal.
- M. Narayani Amma, Taluk Board, Kottayam.
- T. Kalyanikutty Ammal, Taluk Board, Calicut.
- K. Madhavi Ammal, Taluk Board, Ernad.
- E. Ammalu Kovilamma, Taluk Board, Walluvanad.
- P. Ikkali Amma, Taluk Board, Ponnani.
- E. Narayanikuttyamma, Municipal Council, Calicut.
- K. P. Narayani Amma, Municipal Council, Cannanore.
- Mrs. L. G. Barnard, Municipal Council, Cochin.
- M. Maragathavalli Ammal, Taluk Board, Tirupattur.
- T. M. Kunjammal, Taluk Board, Srivilliputtur.
- Mrs. Vincent Raj, President, Virudhanagar Women's Association, Municipal Council, Virudhanagar.
- M. Maragathavalli Ammal, Municipal Council, Karaikudi.
- Shrimathi Kunjammal, Municipal Council, Srivilliputtur.
- Radhabai Subbarayan, B.A., Zamindari of Kumaramangalam, Chairman, Madras Presidency Maternity & Child Welfare Association, Salem District Board, Salem.
- Chinnammal, Zamindari of Goundampalayam, Salem District Board, Salem.
- R. V. K. Kripavathiammal, Salem District Board, Salem.
- S. V. Mahalakshmiamma, Taluk Board, Salem.
- Thillaiammal, Taluk Board, Namakkal.
- N. Madhavi Ammal, Municipal Council, Salem.
- Mahalakshmi Varathaswamy, Municipal Council, Salem.
- Jayammal, Tanjore District Board, Tanjore.
- Elizabeth Ammal, Taluk Board, Mannargudi.
- V. Elizabeth Ammal, Municipal Council, Mannargudi.
- Srimati Lingammal, Tinnevely District Board, Tinnevely.
- Padmavati Ammal, Tinnevely District Board, Tinnevely.
- Srimati Lingammal, Taluk Board, Koilpatti.
- Padmavati Ammal, Taluk Board, Tinnevely.
- Sornathai Doraiammal, Municipal Council, Palamcottah.
- M. Kamalam Ponnusamy, Municipal Council, Palamcottah.
- Padmavathi Ammal, Municipal Council, Tinnevely.
- Mrs. D. Manoj, Municipal Council, Tuticorin.

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[Continued.]

Lakshmi Ammal, Taluk Board, Kulittalai.
 Ponnammal, Taluk Board, Udayar-
 palayam.
 Ambujathammal, Municipal Council,
 Srirangam.
 Venkataramanamma Tenneti, Member,
 District Educational Council, Taluk
 Board, Vizagapatam.
 Pesapareddi Sithamma, Taluk Board,
 Bobbili.
 Pedda Munna Bayamma, Municipal
 Council, Tirupati.
 Mathusri Janakammal, Taluk Board,
 Madurantakam.
 Valia Thamburati Avipro, Kovilakam,
 Malikhana-holder, Taluk Board, Wallu-
 vanad.
 Pedda Munna Bayamma, Taluk Board,
 Tirupati.
 Mary Manickavasagam, Taluk Board,
 Sattur.
 Srimati Gnana Velu, Taluk Board,
 Madanapalle.
 P. Venkata Subbamma, Municipal Coun-
 cil, Bezwada.
 G. Ponnammal, Taluk Board, Ramnad.
 G. Vengamma, Taluk Board, Gooty.
 S. Krishnammal, Ramnad District Board,
 Madura.
 S. Krishnammal, Taluk Board, Siva-
 ganga.
 A. R. Ramakkal Ammal, Taluk Board,
 Coimbatore.
 A. Venkata Sitamma, Kistna District
 Board, Kistna Dt.
 Gadhe Kanakavalli Ammal, Guntur Dis-
 trict Board, Guntur.
 Seetha Bai, Bellary District Board,
 Bellary.
 S. Thayammal, Municipal Council,
 Madura.
 M. Kannu Ammal, Taluk Board,
 Trichinopoly.
 V. P. Omana Amma, Taluk Board,
 Kurumbranad.
 R. Sunderambal Mirasidar, Taluk Board,
 Tiruturaiipundi.
 S. Mangamma, Municipal Council,
 Bellary.
 P. Sundaramma, District Board, Guntur.
 C. Rukmani Amma, District Board,
 Cuddapah.
 C. Poamavattir Bin, District Board,
 Cuddapah.
 Subbamma, Taluk Board, Tadpatri.
 B. Achamma, Taluk Board, Anantapur.
 Chenamma, District Board, S. Kanara.

C474. Do you desire now to make a statement or to add anything to those Memoranda?—I understand I will have to appear before the full Committee on

Tuesday. I think I would rather make my statement then.

C475. You appreciate that our hope is that your detailed examination may be taken this afternoon?—Yes.

C476. And if you think that there is sufficient in the Memoranda to enable the sub-committee to carry out that detailed examination, then I agree that you should make your statement only before the main Committee?—If you would permit me to say a few words about the Mahila Samiti I would like to do so.

C477. Please?—The Mahila Samiti is a successor to the Women's organisations which were started and carried on in Bengal since the early eighties of the last century, through the effort of pioneer workers. It was founded in 1905, and has gradually extended its activities. Although its work is mainly intended for Bengal it has brought Bengal into contact with various other parts of India. In 1908 this Samiti organised a Conference which was presided over by Her Highness the Maharanee of Baroda. This Conference was attended by representative women numbering over 500 from Bombay, Madras, Punjab, the Central Provinces, and other parts of India. About 1914 it further extended its activities by raising funds and sending young women students to England for further studies and training. For this purpose a Branch Association was formed in London called the Indian Women's Educational Association which exists here to the present day, and is doing useful work. During the Great War the Samiti stirred the whole of Bengal by organising active work in different centres for the purpose of supplying comforts to the Indian sepoys in the front and to the newly enlisted recruits known as the Bengalee Double Co. In 1917 there was another big Conference of women from different parts of India, held at Calcutta under the auspices of the Mahila Samiti and the Samiti came into contact with various women workers from different parts of India.

In 1918 the Samiti framed a definite scheme for starting a Home School and College for Indian girls which has since materialised into a very useful institution, and we have girls from various parts of India.

Thus for nearly 30 years the Samiti has done silent and steady work for social and educational advancement. It took the lead on the question of women's Suffrage in Bengal at the time when the

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[Continued.]

Indian Franchise Committee visited India and worked in that behalf in conjunction with several women's organisations in Bengal. It can therefore well claim to be heard on the enfranchisement of the Indian women. This is one point, and, my Lord, with your permission, I might emphasise the point which was brought forward by Miss Pickford the other day about Reserved seats in the Provincial Councils and Assemblies.

Chairman.] On what occasion?

Miss Pickford.

C478. I think probably Mrs. P. K. Sen is referring to my questions to the Secretary of State about the representation of Bengal on the Provincial Councils, and also in the Federal Assembly. Is that so?—That is so.

C479. The number of the question is 7454?—It said that in Bengal with a population of 50,000,000 in the Provincial Councils there were five women, and in the Federal Assembly one woman, in Bombay with a population of 18,000,000 (without Sind) six women in the Provincial Council and two women in the Federal Assembly. Madras has eight women in the Provincial Council and two in the Federal Assembly. This point I wanted to bring out before your Lordship.

Chairman.

C480. Would you tell me about your organisation. Have you a definite membership?—Yes, we have.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C481. Confined to Bengal only?—Yes, the Mahila Samiti is confined to Bengal only.

Chairman.

C482. I do not think you give us your total membership in your Memoranda, do you? Could you give me that?—We have not got it in that sort of organised way, because we have small Mahila Samiti's in almost all the districts, and each Association is doing work for the local area. We could estimate it at more than 1,000 at least, and there are other branches which have sprung up from the Mahila Samiti, but which are not exactly in the name of the Mahila Samiti, such as the Saroj Nalini Association which has 222 branches all over Bengal, and, especially in the rural districts. It is really a part of the Mahila Samiti. There are other Associations which have also sprung up from this Mahila Samiti. This is a sort of parent body—the mother I

might call it. May Mrs. Mukerji add something?

C483. I might ask you a question on that last observation of yours. Are you meeting with much opposition from Indians in India?—No, I do not think so.

C484. Is there any organised opposition to your propaganda?—I cannot quite say that. I do not think there is.

C485. You are not conscious of any strong organised opposition?—Against our views there might be opposition.

C486. Let me ask you in connection with that whether you have been carrying on any active propaganda in Bengal or elsewhere in favour of your suggestions with reference to the White Paper scheme?—There has been no sort of propaganda. We have held meetings in Calcutta, and also in the districts, but I cannot say that it was propaganda on a large scale against the White Paper.

C487. Has there been evident any opposition to, or resistance against your proposals for amending the Government's scheme?—Regarding some of our methods, of course, there is difference of opinion with the other organisations, but I think their object is all the same, because we all want adequate representation, I think.

Miss Pickford.

C487A. With regard to the last question that the Chairman has put to you, would it be fair to say that your organisation and the All-India Women's Conference are entirely agreed as to the necessity of an adequate number of women being on the electoral roll in order to make their needs and opinions felt?—Yes, that is quite so.

C488. But there is some difference between you as to the best way of bringing the women upon the electoral roll?—Yes, that is so.

C489. That it is a difference of detail, but an agreement in principle?—Yes, that is so.

C490. Am I right in thinking that there is a branch of the All-India Women's Conference in Bengal?—Yes, there is; recently formed.

C491. You are or were a member of that organisation at one time?—At one time I was, yes.

C492. And the Mahila Samiti, and the All-India Women's Conference are really pursuing the same objects, namely, improvement in the education and social conditions of women and girls?—Yes.

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[Continued.]

Chairman.

C493. Mrs. Mukerji, I rather think you wish to say a word or two before the general examination begins?—(Mrs. Mukerji.) Yes, I wish to say that under the auspices of the Mahila Samiti many Women's Committees have sprung up in Bengal dealing with all the different vital matters that deal with the improvement of women, such as the Women's Union which has tried to bring forward in the Council the Immoral Traffic Bill. We want to have it passed all over India. It has done great work in that way. We have got over 2,000 signatures including those of men, and, although the Mahila Samiti has now rather gone into the background, to give more energy to these new Associations that have sprung up under its auspices, where the younger generation seem to be taking a lead—

C494. Could you give us an indication of the scope of the welfare work in which those organisations were interested?—Yes. One is this immoral traffic, and the other is that homes have sprung up for the children of these women who are, I should say, fallen women.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C495. Foundling Homes?—Foundling Homes, and there have been several Vigilance Societies to watch over and to take care of girls who are led astray.

Chairman.

C496. Have those activities been mainly urban or have they penetrated into the rural areas?—They have penetrated into the rural areas. Their centres have been urban, but they have tried to extend their activities to rural areas.

C497. Are you yourself conscious of the organisations at work in Bengal known as the Co-operative Welfare Societies?—Yes, I am conscious of it. I am not a member; I have heard of these societies. I am not actually a member of the Co-operative Society.

C498. Are your members, or supporters, to your knowledge, taking any active part in that work?—I cannot say about the Co-operative Societies. Lady Bose has an organisation which actually works in the rural areas, but it is not known as a Co-operative Society. You might put it under that head, but the work is in the villages to get the widows and women—

C499. I am thinking of the anti-malarial societies. Malaria after all,

though it bears hardly on the men bears even more hardly on the women?—That is more in the hands of the medical associations. But maternity work we have distinctly taken a great lead in. We have baby clinics all over Bengal, even in some of the village places, and especially in Calcutta, and there once or twice a week the Society maidens take it upon themselves to go there and dole out milk and give food to children and to see to their medical requirements if they are ill or sick in any way. They give them medicine and see to their medical requirements. We have established centres for the last 10 years or more, and even some of the Girl Guides take part in that.

C500. With regard to your maternity welfare work, have you any centres for training midwives?—We have centres for training midwives in some places. We have some under the auspices of the Government; we have health visitors and also midwives who go round, and they are paid a nominal sum, for this nominal sum they go and do accouchement for the poor women who cannot go to hospitals, due to purdah and other reasons.

C501. As an organisation you associate work of that kind with the general progress of women, material and political?—Yes; I do. In Chittagong I was directly concerned with this. We had a Maternity Committee and I was for some time President of this, and we actually gave out clothing and we sent out these midwives to these poor people who actually could not go to hospitals, and I and other ladies in turn visited the homes of these women who were in a state of accouchement.

C502. You regard the matter of the franchise as it affects women as very directly associated with the advancement of work of that kind?—Yes, because I think, when the laws are passed, they might touch on the improvements for this sort of thing. It is all a question of finance, and it is finance that is needed always. We had to raise money for public charity as it were, to help these women. If we have a sufficient representation in the Councils we might get the money directly from the funds put aside for medical or educational needs.

C503. Would you expect the general quickening of interests in affairs which is likely to follow the grant of the vote, in its turn to make a contribution towards the interest which women would take in that type of work?—I think decidedly so.

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Mrs. P. K. SEN and Mrs. L. MUKERJI.

[Continued.]

C504. Have you any further statements which you desire to make?—It was only regarding these organisations, and I think your Lordship has heard enough of that.

Miss Mary Pickford.

C505. I understand that you have been asked to represent also the ladies who have sent in memoranda Nos. 42 and 43 from Madras?—Yes.

C506. You are in substantial agreement with the proposals that are put forward in those two memoranda?—Yes; we are in agreement with the general principles of them.

C507. I think, Mrs. Sen, you are also in fairly close touch with the women in Bihar?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) Yes. I was in Bihar for almost 15 years. That is why in fact I asked Mrs. Mukerji to come with me to say something about Bengal, as I was not very closely in touch with the work in Bengal.

Miss Mary Pickford.] The differences in points of detail between these memoranda and those that have been put in on behalf of the All-India Women's Conference may be said to be that you are in favour of the proposal put forward by the Indian Franchise Committee of enfranchising the wives and widows of men with a certain property qualification, and they do not like that particular qualification.

Chairman.] I just want to say one word, you Mrs. Sen, or Mrs. Mukerji, will either of you answer these questions as you please?

Miss Mary Pickford.

C508. Is it your view that some such qualification as that will give a fairer distribution of voting strength than the proposal put forward by the All-India Women's Conference for enfranchising urban areas alone?—Yes; we feel very strongly that the rural areas want the help and we cannot leave out the rural areas. There should be no discrimination between town and country. I have put that clearly in my memorandum. Both the Madras memoranda have stressed this point very clearly. I do not know whether I am in a position to say that they would accept anything. I have said in my memorandum that I was prepared to accept any other alternative. The Madras alternative I presume all the Members of the Committee have read, and they seem to be very strong on the fact that the vote there is of far greater importance and value to

them in educating them and raising their status generally than it is to the women in the urban areas. In the urban areas they have already got a special qualification regarding literacy because in the villages you would not get so many literate women. They have already that advantage in the urban districts, and if another special qualification of adult women suffrage is given in the urban areas, the rural areas would really be in the background and we are afraid that there would really be no improvement which we all want very strongly. 90 per cent. of the population as you all know are in agricultural districts and it is for their improvement that we want wife's votes. That would be a fair and even distribution at least if we have to accept any special qualifications at all.

C509. From your experience would you agree with a statement in memorandum 43 which is sent in by ladies who have experience on local boards in Madras?—Yes.

C510. It is a very short paragraph, so perhaps it would be simpler if I read it: "We state with full confidence and a real knowledge of rural conditions that women in rural areas have no objection to a vote on the husband's qualifications and consider that at the present time and under the present circumstances in Indian villages it would be regarded as quite fair and in no way derogatory to women"—Yes.

C511. Would you agree with that?—Yes; we would agree to that because I think in India the wife and husband really regard themselves as equal partners and the home duties. The husband has his duties outside the home but the wife has the dominating influence inside the home. Both of them go to make up the fortunes of the home. I do not see how it is derogatory to accept the husband's property qualifications, because I think it would be giving a status to the Indian women that they are a sort of equal partners to their husbands if they are given the vote on their husband's property qualifications. The Hindu law is much against the women of India and it is very difficult to change that all of a sudden. In Madras they say that quite distinctly and in Bengal and in Bahar I can speak quite independently and also for the United Provinces. I have also had experience of talking to the women of Assam and they all supported the 'wives' vote and do not think it is derogatory in any sense.

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[Continued.]

C512. I suppose it would be taken for granted in India as well as in England that a husband may influence his wife's vote and a wife influence her husband's because they would influence each other's ideas?—Yes; certainly.

C513. But would you say that a vote given on the husband's property qualifications would be a less independent vote than that given on some other qualification?—The same argument was used even in this country, when women first got their votes on the husband's property qualifications, but since the vote was given I have heard from ladies who worked during those times and they say that it made no difference to them. I think it would be the same in India, and even if it had some influence I do not see what harm it could do. (Mrs. Mukerji.) May I put forward a point? I do not see how the qualifications would influence the idea of the vote. If the wife got the vote on her own merits, she might be just as much under the influence of her husband.

C514. You recognise that it may exist, but it may not have anything to do with the electoral qualifications?—I do not see how it would.

Mr. M. B. Jayaker.

C515. That is an argument against giving votes to wives at all?—No; I do not see that.

C516. I say the argument would be against giving the wife a vote if she is influenced?—I am saying it is not against it, but it does not affect the vote.

Dr. B. B. Ambedkar.

C517. Quite so?—We are trying to get a strength of vote of the women. We see, by the statistics, that the number of women with independent property qualifications is much lower than that of husbands because in our country, according to the new law of inheritance, the women do not inherit equally with the men. Therefore, naturally, the independent property qualification is much lower with women. Therefore, we want to get a strength of vote in order to progress all the women's causes in India, because, then, we can be in touch with the actual laws passed. If we do not take advantage of this how shall we get the strength of the vote, because the figures show that under the husband's property qualification the figures are adopted to a great extent in Madras. I need not put the figures before you

because you have them already. That is the chief point.

Miss Mary Pickford.

C518. I want to ask you a question about the reservation of seats. Even with a fairly large women's franchise do you think that without reservation it will be likely under present circumstances that many women would be elected to general constituencies in competition with men?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) No. In the Madras memoranda the ladies say they have had experience of standing for election and that it would be impossible for women to get on to the seats unless they were reserved seats in the beginning.

C519. They give some figures to prove that which we need not quote because they are in the memoranda?—Yes. (Mrs. Mukerji.) It is quite impossible for them to get into the ropes of these elections which are very knotty and tricky in the very beginning. You must give them a few years.

C520. As it has been difficult for them to get on local boards where the franchise is very extended and women have a large number of votes, it would be more difficult to get on to the local Councils and on to the Federal Assembly?—Yes.

C521. Therefore, you do attach importance to having seats reserved for women so that women may be able to express their points of view?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) Yes, under the circumstances. (Mrs. Mukerji.) May I add a point that only for one election and subject to change at the next election.

C522. Only one election?—Because one election carries you 5 years. Supposing in those 5 years, we are able to stand on our own merits, we ought to be given a chance of doing so and if we find we are not able to stand on our merits we can abide by that for another election, but 5 years is a long time. It should be only time for us to get into the ropes and the working of it.

C523. It would be one election only, would it not—5 years?—It would be a good thing to give us the option of the one election.

Chairman.

C524. That is the maximum statutory period; it might conceivably be shorter. —“accidents happen in the best of regulated families”?—It would not be shorter than 4 years, would it?

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[Continued.]

Mr. M. B. Jayakar.

C525. The first election would come at the beginning of this 5 years' period and not at the end?—Yes.

Miss Mary Pickford.

C526. I think you are strongly in favour of the literacy qualification for women?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) Yes; certainly. We should have the literacy qualification restored as was proposed by the Indian Franchise Committee.

C527. You have seen no doubt the proposals in the White Paper that the women who might be voters under their husband's property qualification should have to apply. Do you think that would largely reduce the number of people who would actually be placed upon the roll?—Yes, certainly, much more than has been estimated by the White Paper—very much more. I do not think you would get one woman out of 10 applying for the vote if they have to apply.

C528. The arguments have been put forward that there would certainly in some parts of India be objections to the officer responsible for the drawing up of the roll making a kind of rather detailed enquiry which would be necessary in order to place the name upon the roll. Have you any criticism to offer from your own experience in the Provinces that you know?—I have not actual experience, but I could say that the difficulty could easily be overcome by saying "The wife of so-and-so". There would be absolutely no difficulty that way. I think it has been over-estimated—the difficulty about the officers going and making enquiries like they do. Is that what you refer to?

C529. Yes?—I think the difficulties have really been over-estimated and it can easily be done because the husband's name will be put on the roll; at the same time the wife's name also could be put on the roll. I do not see the difficulty there.

C530. You realise that any person who is placed on the electoral roll has to be absolutely identified. Do you think it would be sufficient to say "The wife of so-and-so", without giving the name?—Yes; I think that would be because the husband would be there. He would be able to identify the wife.

Mr. R. A. Butler.

C531. Mrs. Sen, may I ask you a question about paragraph 5 of your first memorandum 41? Do you know if there

are any records in Bengal which would make it possible easily to establish a lower educational qualification than the one suggested?—No; I have not been able to find that out, I say quite frankly, but there must be some way of having educational qualifications tested. I have not gone into those details further.

C532. The next question was about paragraph 12 of your memorandum. You say that the qualifications for the Upper Chamber should be such as to secure the eligibility of a considerable number of women?—Yes.

C533. Does that refer to proposal No. 27 of the White Paper which gives the qualifications for a member of the Council of State?—Yes.

C534. Would you regard those as shutting out women candidates for the Council of State?—Yes; but we wanted educational qualifications as well.

C535. You say "the qualifications"; I wanted to know whether you meant the qualifications for membership?—Yes.

C536. That is what Proposal 27 refers to?—I have not studied that question.

C537. Would you be able to tell us what further qualifications you would like added for the sake of women?—I think if you admit the wives of propertied men, you could allow them also in the Upper Chamber.

C538. I think we are at cross purposes, because I take your memorandum to mean the qualifications of candidates for the Council of State as apart from the question of franchise?—Yes.

C539. Is that what your memorandum means?—It says "the qualifications for the Upper Chamber should be such as to secure the eligibility of a considerable number of women." That is what I have said, and that is what they have all said in their memoranda. The White Paper is not quite clear on that point.

C540. I want to get clear whether you are referring to the qualifications of the candidate, that is to say, that he should be over 30 years of age and so forth, or whether you mean the franchise, because it is different surely in your memorandum?—I know.

C541. Which are you referring to there?—The qualifications as well as the franchise?

C542. You only refer to the qualifications?—Yes. We want representation there too, because it is most important that we should be adequately represented in the Upper Chamber, which is the most conservative Chamber, I should say, as regards women's legislation,

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[Continued.]

C543. My question was restricted solely to the qualifications, and I wanted to ask you whether you had any other suggestions to add to Proposal No. 27 of the White Paper?—No; I have not. (Mrs. Mukerji.) May I suggest something, and that is to give educational qualifications, not of a very high standard, but something like upper primary?

C544. I wonder if you would refer to paragraph 7 of Memorandum No. 43 from Madras. This memorandum says that the Government do not give any figures or state reasons for arriving at the ratio of 1 to 7 as a figure?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) Yes.

C545. Perhaps it would help you if I told you that the gross figure that we have calculated is a figure of one woman to 4.8 men—that is the actual ratio gross?—That is the actual ratio?

C546. Yes. The gross—before you allow any deductions for overlapping?—There would be a large number of deductions.

C547. That is why I am giving you the explanation which is asked for in this memorandum, and I can give you actually the figures, if you desire, upon which it is based?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) It gives 1 in 7 here.

C548. I may explain to you the gross figure is 1 to 4.8, but when you have allowed for the overlap of the different qualifications you arrive at the figure of 1 to 7?—Yes, I think that is what it is.

C549. Do you not regard 1 to 4.8 as a gross figure as being more satisfactory?—Yes, that is, of course, more satisfactory.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C550. Can you avoid an overlap?—We cannot avoid overlap because there are some women who would come under the literacy qualification who would have husbands.

C551. Who would be married?—Yes.

Mr. F. S. Cocks.

C552. May I ask you about the education qualification? Do you hold that the only education qualification should be simply literacy?—Certainly.

C553. Coming to the election to the Assembly, do you know how it is proposed that women should be elected to the Assembly—that is to say, it is proposed they should be elected by the members of the Provincial Legislature?—Yes.

C554. Are you in favour of that?—No, we do not agree with that, because that would be an indirect election. We want some form of direct election. It would really be much better and it would

educate the women for what they had to face later on. Some form of direct election is what we would prefer, and I think that proposal that the capital town should be the constituent area and women from all over the Province would be allowed to stand for election is a proposal which appeals to us. Under that it would be taken by rotation. That would be really much more satisfactory than having indirect election.

C555. You think it would be the best method?—I do think so.

C556. You were asked just now by Mr. Butler about the qualifications for the Upper Chamber. The qualification for a member of the Upper Chamber is, first of all, a property qualification?—Yes.

C557. Secondly, he must be a member of another Legislature, a Provincial one or a Federal one?—Yes.

C558. Or must hold any special qualification conferred for distinguished public services?—Yes.

C559. Those are the three qualifications?—Yes.

C560. You think that would rule out a great many women?—Yes. There would be very few, in fact none, there, because many of them have not got the property qualification, and in the case of the other two qualifications they do not apply to Indian women at all.

C561. What I would like you to state, if you could, is what additional qualification you suggest?—Literacy and matriculation qualification for the Upper Chamber.

C562. You consider Matriculation should be a qualification?—Yes. Perhaps for the Upper Chamber you do not need a very high qualification, but at the same time I feel it would be shutting out women who are doing work. Many of them have not got the Matriculation qualification. But if you want women in the Legislatures in the beginning of the Constitution you would have to do with the Matriculation test, but even then there would be very few women who would be able to show that.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C563. They would have to contribute to the discussion in the Upper Chamber, and they would play a very responsible part in the administration of the country?—Yes.

C564. Therefore, you must have highly qualified women if they are to represent the women of India in the Upper Chamber?—Yes. (Mrs. L. Mukerji.) It is a matter on which a great deal of common

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sense is also needed. A young woman who has very high qualifications would not be as capable as an older woman who has had experience of social work but has not the advantage of academical qualifications.

C565. That commonsense must be brought home to the other members of the Upper Chamber, otherwise that commonsense is no good at all?—But our statistics show that the chief women workers have not academical qualifications, and therefore you would shut them out from these posts if you put on a very high qualification.

Mr. M. B. Jayaker.

C566. Among those who are at present prominent women workers for the women's cause how many have academical qualifications, speaking in the language of percentage?—Very few. I cannot speak in percentages, but certainly the percentage is less than 50 per cent.

C567. You apprehend that by setting up academical qualifications of that kind these women who have been pioneers in the movement would be shut out?—Yes.

C568. Which would be very disastrous?—Yes, I think so. There are very few of us who have academical qualifications.

Mr. F. S. Cocks.

C569. Would you be in favour of the wife of the man who had property qualifications for the State Council being eligible for the State Council?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) Yes, I think so, because their social status would be the same, and I think that would be quite fair.

C570. Have you any views as to how they should be elected to the Council of State?—Well, there are no reserved seats now, and since in the White Paper you are giving reserved seats in the Federal Legislatures and the Legislative Council, there should be reserved seats in the Upper Chamber also, because here it is most important that women should be represented. But it is very difficult to say the numbers—I do not know what the proportion should be—but we want at least some reserved seats there.

C571. The Governor-General has power to nominate 10 members to the Upper Chamber?—Yes.

C572. Would you be satisfied if it was said one or two out of the 10 should be women?—No, I do not think we would like that at all—not without some form of an election—some kind of election would be much better.

C573. Do you mean some form of election by women or by general electorates?—No, by general electorates. (Mrs. L. Mukerji.) From each Province, I should say—an open election, not chosen from the Provincial seats in the Council.

Chairman.

C574. Direct?—Yes.

Mr. F. S. Cocks.

C575. You say in your memorandum that women in India have always been free from communal differences?—Yes.

C576. Could you expand that a little? Do you mean to say that women in India have never been interested very much in the differences between the various religions?—No, I do not think so, really. They have had no communal differences so far. They are united on that one point at least. In any work that we do in any of the Provinces—and I have worked on various bodies—we do not find this communal question coming in at all.

C577. Is it confined to the men?—So far, I think. It might penetrate, I think, to women also, but we do not want it.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C578. And it does not penetrate in a good many men either?—In Bengal we had a representation to the Governor from the women there, and there were women of all types—Gujeratis, Muhamadans, Hindus, Marathas, Parsees, and Bengalis. I am a member of at least six or seven associations in Calcutta, and the communal question has never come in.

Mr. F. S. Cocks.

C579. You feel no rivalry or enmity in that respect?—Rivalry in ordinary circumstances in life but not communal.

Chairman.

C580. How do you account for that fact? Can you account at all for the fact that the communal differences are much less to be observed in the case of women than in the case of men?—I think because the communal differences come in the professions. It is in the rivalry in professional qualifications that they come in and the men stick to them; but we have not any professions, and no rivalry so far has been produced—we have not come in contact with the idea at all. This communal idea comes in when you come in contact with the rivalry for posts in public positions or in professional occupations. That is usually the point where the communal idea comes

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in and one considers there are so many Muhammadans and so many Sikhs. But with women not having to go for that, the idea never comes in at all.

C581. In your experience do the communal prejudices arise in the case of boys in the home?—No, I do not find it so at all.

C582. About what age in the case of boys does the communal prejudice begin to show itself? Is it when they leave the home?—I think, decidedly, when they enter into their professions.

C583. That is your strong impression?—That is my strong impression. There is always something common touching the case of women which brings them together, and they never think of communal ideas. I have worked alongside with Muhammadans, Hindus, Gujeratis, and when there is rivalry for some post in the Association, such as office bearers, the communal idea honestly has never come in at all.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C584. Do not they come in when the young child is sent to the communal school or college?—Yes, that is why we are so much against the communal school, but on going to the Hindu school, I do not think the children think really about the communal idea—as mothers, we must say so, I think.

C585. If a child goes to a Hindu college or a Hindu university, or to a Muslim college or a Muslim university, does it not become tainted with communal ideas by reason of the isolation from the general community springing up?—I do not think so. In the case of a child of that age the professors do not touch on these points. It is only instruction that is given. Until they begin to go into the world and think of these social distinctions, which come from going into the world, according to my experience, I have never found a child has touched on communal differences in his speech or in his conversation. (Mrs. P. K. Sen.) May I supplement that? We in fact passed a resolution at the All-India Conference, asking for the doing away of these communal institutions. The women are very much against these communal institutions—we do not want them.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C586. Is it not the fact that the woman's movement is international in its outlook all over the world?—Yes.

C587. Is it not also a fact that in this

matter we have the support of all parties?—That is so.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

588. Is it to be inferred that these communal differences would very likely spread to the women if the women were to enter the professions?—(Mrs. L. Mukerji.) I do not think so. I think that woman by nature is free from such communal feelings on account of her sex.

C589. For instance, to-day the struggle or scramble for jobs and professional appointments is really confined to the men?—Yes.

C590. Largely, because women in India are not earning members of the family?—I quite see your point.

C591. Therefore, to take the case of education, if a large section of women along with men were entering that profession, and other professions as a result of education, on your own analysis, perhaps the thing would develop among women?—It is quite possible. I cannot answer that point until we see the result.

C592. I appreciate that, but I just wanted to put the point to you?—I feel in a future time, when our women will be in a position to go into the professions, that the communal business might die out altogether. I anticipate that.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] I hope so.

Chairman.

C593. You think women have more common sense than men?—Yes, I honestly think so.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C594. They are supposed to be "the better half"?—One of our poets, writing in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, said: "Women are born diplomats".

Chairman.

C595. Well, I must preserve complete impartiality on that?—Men have admitted that women are more intuitive, and if you are more intuitive, you act on your common sense. Men are more likely to base their arguments on facts, but women will go on their intuition and I think that all goes in with common sense.

Chairman.] The great advantage of acting on intuition is that you cannot be proved to be wrong.

Mr. Cocks.

C596. I will not pursue that point, but does what you say as to the comparative

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immunity of women from communal differences apply to such questions as Untouchability?—Yes; so far women have accepted Untouchability as it is because you must understand that Untouchability sprang up from hygienic principles. The Untouchables usually led unhygienic lives and, therefore, we had to isolate them. We accepted it as a tradition, and, generally, because of hygienic principles, all these Untouchables were isolated. Their professions were rigid then, but, since they are not so much tied to their professions, the Untouchable idea will also die away, I think.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C597. Untouchability is a heritage of law?—But there was the hygienic principle, too.

C598. As those laws have been relaxed, Untouchability is going?—Yes, but the chief idea was that, if a man had to deal with unhygienic things, we did not like to bring him into the home and let him touch anything. Often he would be dealing with refuse, and, naturally, even women when they have children and want them to be sanitary and clean did not like them to touch him. But it was on no other ground. It was based on purely hygienic principles. Now that we are having sanitation and all modern methods and ideas of cleanliness, we feel that this idea of Untouchability will die out. It was not due to any prejudice from the women's point of view that there were any restrictions in the matter of Untouchability.

Mr. Cocks.

C599. Would you say with regard to legislation affecting women and children that India is not so advanced as many other countries in the West?—I think so.

C600. Do you think that such legislation will not have much chance of being carried out unless there is a large body of women electors?—Certainly, because the men do not have time to think of these things—they are so full of administrative difficulties that with them come first, but to the women the social welfare of the community would be the first idea. In the case of men, so often the first idea is something quite different.

Sir Hari Singh Gour.

C601. May I explain to you what we have been doing this morning. This morning we have been examining Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Mrs. Hamid

Ali, and they entirely agree with you that communalising is the bane of nationalism and must go. They are not in favour of any communal electorates?—(Mrs. P. K. Sen.) Quite so.

C602. You agree with them so far?—Yes.

C603. I see from your memorandum that you differ from them on this point, namely, that you want the wife to have the husband's qualification and so can go on the roll?—Yes.

C604. They say we do not want the wife to have the qualification of the husband, but she should go on the electorate roll on the strength of her own qualification?—Yes.

C605. That is one point on which you differ?—Yes.

C606. That is the only one on which you have any real difference with them, otherwise you entirely agree with them?—Yes.

C607. That is a point of detail?—Yes.

C608. What you really want is a larger vote for women. It does not matter how it is got—that is the only question between you on that?—Yes.

C609. And they also want a larger vote for women. It does not matter how it comes, though they have a prejudice against the wife getting a vote upon her husband's qualification?—(Mrs. Sen.) That is quite right, but as I have already said, we have also got a disinclination to leaving out the rural areas.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C610. There is just one question I would like to ask you, Mrs. Sen. You have explained your views with regard to the representation of women in the Federal Lower House, and you have stated your objection to the provision made in the White Paper for indirect election?—Yes.

C611. I do not find anywhere your views as to the provisions made for the representation of women in the Provincial Legislatures, except, of course, that you have expressed generally that you would not like any provision which savours of communalism?—Yes.

C612. Have you anything to suggest on that?—I did not quite follow the question.

C613. In the Provincial Legislatures several seats are provided which are to be filled by women?—Yes.

C614. No detailed provisions are laid down in the White Paper as to how those seats are to be filled. It is Appendix III, of the White Paper, on page 93. Under

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"General," Madras, out of 152, 6 women; Muhammadan, 29, including one woman. This is all the provision that exists in the White Paper, so far?—We would like to do away with all these communities, if you would give us six seats in each of the Provinces. That would be much better, and we should be able to fill these seats with the best women available.

C615. Have you any other method by which these six seats could be filled up?—Yes; capital city, for the Federal Assembly. I have already answered that question. It would be the same for the Provincial Assembly also. The capital city would be the constituent area; it would be a small electorate. It would not mean so much expense, and women from all over the Provinces would be able to stand for the seats.

C616. You would have one capital city to return six women in Madras?—They would have their separate seats.

C617. The question I wanted to ask was how far you agree? Would you be prepared, as a matter of concession to the communal sentiment of the various communities, that while making arrangements on the basis of a joint electorate for the return of such women in the Legislative Councils, to have a permission reserving a certain number of seats, for instance, for the Muslim women, keeping the total the same?—We are against reservation.

C618. I can quite understand your objection to having a separate electorate of Hindu women to return five Hindu women and a separate electorate of Muslim women to return one Muslim woman. What I want to know is this: Whether you have also the same objection to a system in which both the Hindu women and the Muslim women would vote together in a common constituency—a joint constituency, with this reservation, that, at least, one seat would be reserved for a Muslim woman?—They would all vote for the Muhammadan lady.

C619. I know that you would probably be so generous that you may give more. Would you be prepared to approve a reservation being made by law that just one should be reserved for a Muslim woman?—Yes; that is already there, and we have to accept that.

C620. That may be on the basis of separate electorate, it is not stated how it would be. Therefore, I wanted to get your opinion on the matter. The de-

tailed provisions as to how these six seats in Madras are to be filled are not found in the White Paper?—That would be a joint electorate of men and women?

C621. I do not know. At least Mr. Butler might be able to enlighten us as to how these six seats are going to be filled?—(Mrs. Mukerji.) We do not, if it can be avoided, want any communal distinction.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] I quite follow you. I am asking you whether you would be prepared to moderate your objection, to this extent, that you would have a joint electorate with one seat reserved, so as not to disturb the communal balance.

Mr. Butler.] I think that Dr. Ambedgar will find this at page 91, paragraph 8: "The precise electoral machinery to be employed in the constituencies for the special women's seats is still under consideration."

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.] Therefore, I was asking whether these seats would be filled by separate electorates of women in the general constituency; it is not made clear here. I do not know how it is done, because I find in the Table given on page 93, seats allocated under separate heads. Under "General," six women's seats, under "Muhammadan," one; that rather gives me the impression that you would have a separate electorate of Muslim women only, so that the result would be that 28 would be men, and one a woman. I do not know; I seek for information upon the point.

Chairman.

C622. I think we had better use this afternoon in getting information out of the Witnesses. Will you return to the point?—(Mrs. Sen.) It would not be at least a separate women's electorate.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

C623. If left to you, you might give them all the six, or more than that?—Quite.

C624. I mean, in view of the fear that there may be none?—Yes.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C625. Do I take it, Mrs. Sen, that your objection is to a communal reservation of women's seats on the basis of communalism, as also to a communal electorate? Is that so?—Yes.

C626. And that, even if the election was made by a joint electorate of Hindu men and women and Muslim men and women, your objection would be the

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same, if the reservation was in favour of a Muhammadan woman on the basis of her caste?—Yes; we do not want it.

C627. Even if the electorate were joint between the two communities?—No, not if it were joint.

C628. If the electorate was joint, would you agree to the reservation of one or more seats for a Muhammadan man?—Yes, we would agree to that.

C629. I am asking you, because in the morning evidence was given and the Witnesses expressed their view to be very strongly both against communal reservation seats and communal electorates. Therefore, may I take it, that your view on that point is different from their view?—It is not different from their view. We have all along said that we do not want any communalism. Of course, if it is thrust upon us, we shall have to do it.

C630. I am asking your opinion, and I am putting a specific question. Supposing the election was by a joint electorate of men and women, Hindu and Muslim, but there was going to be one or more seats reserved for a Muhammadan woman, and the election is on a non-communal joint electorate?—I would have no objection then, because we would have no other way, I think.

Sir Hari Singh Gour. —

C631. She says she has no objection, in the circumstances; not that she has not an objection in principle?—Of course, everything is under the circumstances.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C632. Then I find that in your Memorandum, paragraph 9, you approve of the wives' vote?—Yes.

C633. May I know if your opinion is shared by a large number of women from the Province which you represent?—Yes, a very large number.

C634. What would be the opinion of those women whose only chance of coming into the electorate would be through the wives' vote? Would it be in favour, or against, this method?—In favour, of course.

C635. Is the charge just and true that those who are at the present moment opposed to this method are mostly women who already will come in by some other door, either the education qualification or the property qualification? Is that charge true?—Yes, quite true; they would all be coming in under the literacy qualification.

C636. Therefore, it is the opinion of women who are already enfranchised?—Yes.

C637. Have we the opinion of women who have not been enfranchised, except through the wives' vote? Has any such opinion been ascertained by some tangible method?—Yes. We have had experience in the rural districts, and they would be quite prepared to accept that.

C638. Then you go on in that paragraph to say that you want some method which would bring up the voting strength to the requisite number. I take it you mean by the requisite number, the number proposed by the Lothian Committee?—Yes; that is quite the minimum.

C639. That is 1 to 4?—That is 1 to 4.

C640. Do you think that is the minimum?—That is the minimum.

C641. Supposing if it was something less than that, 1 to 8, or 1 to 9, do you think there would be considerable uproar and dissatisfaction among the women of India?—I am quite certain of that, and it would be of no use, because women will not go to the electorates, if they are very few in number.

C642. Do you think that the dissatisfaction would be so extensive and marked that it might lead to an open suffrage movement in India?—Quite possibly, although we are quite moderate in our views, and, as you find, our demands are quite moderate; but if it is less than the Lothian Committee has recommended, I am sure there will be a very great uproar against it.

C643. Do you think that the political sense and the keenness for the vote amongst women is so great at the present moment that it may lead to a movement of that character?—Yes, quite possibly.

C644. Now some difficulty has been put before those who are considering this question in this country, arising out of the Hindu custom that in the presence of elders in a Hindu family the woman does not ever mention the name of her husband or the husband does not mention the name of the wife. You are aware of such a thing in orthodox Hindu families?—Yes. The wife does not mention the husband's name. The husband does.

C645. We will take it that the wife does not mention the husband's name. Am I right in saying that it is purely a question of social etiquette?—Yes; and it is dying out now. At the present time we find our daughters and daughters-in-law mentioning their husbands' names. (Mrs. Mukerji.) But not amongst the masses.

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[Continued.]

C646. But do you think that that presents any difficulty in the machinery about the wives' vote?—(Mrs. Sen.) I do not think so.

C647. You think it is over-estimated?—Yes, it is over-estimated; I have found that.

C648. Then I ask the last question about applications. Supposing the requisition about the necessity of applications was insisted upon, you said there would be a very large reduction in the number. Can you give us some idea what the reduction would be? Supposing it were 4,000,000 women who were asked to vote and the further necessity was that they should apply a year in advance, how many do you think would drop out?—I hardly think that even 1,000,000 would apply.

C649. It would be safe to say that about three-quarters of a million would drop out?—Yes.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C650. You said before, 1 in 10?—I did say 1 in 10 before, yes.

Sir *Hari Singh Gour*.

C651. It is only a guess, but she says it will be a very small number?—Very small; it would be almost infinitesimal. (Mrs. Mukerji.) The difficulty of mentioning the husband's name may be overcome by the woman writing or getting someone else to speak for her, because I think in many cases a woman will not be able to mention her husband's name.

Mr. M. R. *Jayaker*.

C652. But you are aware that, in the Law Courts, when a wife is a Witness she has to mention her husband's name, and often does it?—Yes.

C653. So I take it that this practice, assuming it was at one time prevalent, has actually disappeared now?—Yes. (Mrs. Mukerji.) That overcomes the difficulty, if you think they will do it, as they do it in the Law Courts. (Mrs. Sen.) It is dying out now; there is no doubt about it.

C654. How many Hindu women, taking your experience in your own Province, will experience that difficulty now, in modern times?—I think two out of ten would not mention the name of the husband.

Sir *Hari Singh Gour*.

C655. But those will get a neighbour to mention the name?—Yes, they will get somebody else.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C656. How many husbands will mention the wives' names?—They are all allowed to.

Dr. B. R. *Ambedkar*.] That is the point, whether the husband will mention the name of the wife. I think 10 out of 10 would.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C657. Mrs. Sen, could you tell me whether the membership of the organisation which you are representing here to-day is confined only to one community, or whether you have members belonging to all the communities in Bengal?—(Mrs. Sen.) To all communities. The original Memorandum was signed by all communities; I do not know whether it is before you, or not?

Chairman.

C658. Has that been handed in?—Yes, I sent it in, the original copy which was submitted to the Indian Franchise Committee, and it has been signed by all communities.

Begum *Shah Nawaz*.

C659. You are one of the original members of the All-India Women's Conference. Is that not so?—Yes, I am.

C660. You were the Treasurer of the Standing Committee at one time, and you acted as Chairman of the Standing Committee also?—Yes, I did.

C661. You are still a member of the All-India Women's Conference?—I cannot say that I am a member of the All-India Women's Conference, because I did not attend the last two Conferences, and I was not elected on the Standing Committee for that reason.

C662. Is it true, or is not, that you have not been able to attend any meeting of the All-India Women's Conference for the last two and a half years, whether a half-yearly or the annual Session?—Yes.

C663. Therefore, would it not be true to say that you have not been in touch with the opinion of the majority within that organisation?—I cannot say that, because I was getting the papers all right, up to last December. I was Vice-President up to last December, and I was getting all the information. In fact, I was taking part in all the business.

C664. Would I be wrong in saying that almost all the constituencies of the All-India Women's Conference have decided against the wife's vote?—It might be so

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[Continued.]

on paper, but, of course, the constituency does not mean a very large number of women from each Province.

C665. Is it not the fact that there are sub-Committees of the All-India Women's Conference working in almost all the district towns, that delegates are elected who go and take part in these sub-Provincial or Provincial Conferences and then Delegates are elected who go and take part in the annual Session which is held in every year in one Province or another?—Yes, that is so, in theory, but I cannot say that it is done in all the Provinces. With regard to Bengal, it was purely from Calcutta; they got ten members to be Delegates; none from the districts, even from East Bengal, which is a very large constituency. East Bengal has not been represented at all.

C666. But have you only one constituency working in the whole of Bengal of the All-India Women's Conference?—There are supposed to be three existing constituencies, but, in fact, only one is working.

C667. It is not so in my Province, but I shall not press the point any further. I suppose you are aware of the objections which the women in these organisations are putting forward against the wife's vote? One of the objections is this: That it is the quality of the vote that matters to them, far more than anything else?—Yes, we are aware of that.

C668. That they want the vote to be such as would raise their status in life, and getting the vote through their husbands would not help them to raise that status?—Yes. We have balanced both these proposals, and we find that it would cause very great injustice to leave out the rural ladies. That is our only reason for supporting the wife's vote—one of the main reasons.

Mr. M. R. Jayaker.

C669. Can I say that you regard this merely as a question of sentiment, and that their status when connected with their husbands' property would be lowered?—Yes, I think so, to a certain extent.

Begum Shah Nawaz.

C670. There is one other objection, Mrs. Sen, that the majority of these women feel that if the wife was not given the vote just because she happens to be the wife of the voter, then some of the women in some of the other communities where they are inheriting property would

come on to the electoral rolls, and, as you and I are both aware, most of these communities are vying with each other in voting strength; this would mean that the women who at present are not enjoying their rights of inheritance in other communities, could get those laws altered if that vote is not given to them just because they happen to be the wife of the voter?—I do not think there is anything in that. I think that if we have adequate representation in the Legislatures the women themselves would be the best persons to alter the laws. Some of the social reformers like Mr. Jayaker and Sir Hari Sing Gour have tried their best to reform the Hindu law, but there are many obstacles in the way. It is not only because women will be on the rolls on the husband's property qualification that this objection might arise. I think it is more likely that if the women are there these laws would be easily changed.

C671. Would not the orthodox members be compelled to give the women their rights of inheritance if their getting the vote depended on their having a property qualification?—I do not think so.

C672. Supposing that the Joint Parliamentary Committee could find a feasible qualification which would give the woman the vote in her own right, you would have no objection to that qualification being accepted?—No, certainly not, if some other method could be found which is better than the wife's vote we would have no objection.

C673. Am I right in concluding from your evidence that you accept the property and literacy qualifications recommended by the Lothian Committee, and you are also prepared to accept the wife's vote for this transitional period, as one would call it?—Yes, that is so.

C674. And it is your demand that the minimum number of women voters that would be acceptable to almost everyone in the whole of India is that recommended by the Lothian Committee both for the Provincial and Central Legislatures?—Yes, that is so, except that we have proposed a little more in the Federal Legislature than the Lothian Committee has proposed. We want for the Federal Legislature a little more than for the Provincial Legislatures. If it is impossible we should have to fall back on what the Lothian Committee has recommended, that is to say, 6,820,000, but any number which is less than that would be quite unacceptable.

C675. You are aware, Mrs. Sen, that we have many women's organisations in

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my country, some of them working in Provinces alone, others are All-India Associations like the All-India Women's Conference?—Yes, I am aware of that.

C676. It is a fact, is it not, that none of these organisations have sent any representative over here to give evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee?—Yes.

C677. None of these other organisations, I mean?—No, they have not.

C678. May I know why, when it was decided by the three All-India Women's organisations to send certain elected representatives, your organisation, which happens to be more or less confined to one province only, decided to send a representative to give evidence here?—Yes, but, although I am representing only Bengal, these two Memoranda represent the views of a large number of women from Madras; they also agree with us, and then I can speak from personal knowledge, because I have worked quite a great deal in Bihar. The women in Bihar would be quite agreeable to accepting the wife's votes.

C679. Is it because you feel that the wife's vote perhaps is the only feasible qualification at present by which you can get a large number of women voters, that you decided to send a representative here?—Yes, that is so.

C680. You would agree with me, would you not, that if there are to be reserved seats for women they should be given to them in all the Provincial Assemblies as well as in the Central Legislatures?—Yes, certainly they should be.

C681. There should also be reserved seats in the Upper Chamber, as you said just now?—Yes, I have said that.

C682. You are against indirect election to the Legislative Assembly, that is to say, the Lower House, are you not?—Yes, I am against that.

C683. One of your objections to that indirect election would be this, would it not, that if it is left in the hands of the members of the Provincial Councils it would mean that women belonging to the majority party only will get elected to the Federal Assembly who, in many cases, cannot be your and my real representatives?—Yes, that is quite so. They would not be the women's women, which is what we want really.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C684. I have only two questions, I think. I think, Mrs. Sen, you hold the view that the administrative difficulty of ascertaining the wife's name is not as

great as has been suggested in evidence?—Yes.

C685. And that, by one means or other, the wife's name could be obtained?—Yes.
C686. What amount of difficulty do you think there would be in actually polling women? Will they require women officers in the polling booth and separate entrances, or do you think that will not be the case?—Separate entrances would be necessary, I think, in the beginning, and perhaps one woman to help. That would be quite enough.

C687. You do not think, from your experience, that the actual business of polling women voters who want to come and record their votes will create great difficulty? You do not think the fiscal problem of polling the women voters, if they are not more than, say, one in five, will be a very formidable problem?—I do not think it will be. As matters are progressing at the present moment, I do not think there will be any difficulty in the polling.

C688. Have you had any experience?—I personally have not had, but Mrs. Mukerji attended a polling booth, and perhaps, if you wanted to know, she could add to it. (Mrs. *Mukerji*.) We had a municipal election at Calcutta some years ago, and it was organised by women, and I think it was very successful, and we got more women than we anticipated to come there, and even purdah women. There was a larger number of purdah women than we expected.

C689. Did you make any special arrangements in that respect?—They had purdah arrangements for the purdah women to come.

C690. Were the polling booths manned by women polling officers?—Yes, they were manned mostly by women.

Dr. *B. R. Ambedkar*.

C691. Was there a woman candidate in the election which you canvassed?—No, at that time, but later on there have been.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C692. Only one other question, Mrs. Sen. You said earlier on that under the proposals of the White Paper, if I understood you correctly, a large number of women who had been most actively engaged in social work and political propaganda would be disenfranchised. Did I understand you correctly?—(Mrs. *Sen*.) How?

C693. I understood you to say under the proposals of the White Paper a large number of women who are to-day

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[Continued.]

in the forefront of the women's movement and social reform would not, in practice, find their way on to the electoral roll?—Yes, if a high educational test was applied.

Marquess of *Lothian*.] The White Paper proposal.

Sir *Hari Singh Gour*.

C694. If the educational test for women is the same as for men?—Yes, that is true.

Marquess of *Lothian*.

C695. You think that the difficulty would be removed by the literacy qualification. That would, in practice, bring all the women who are actively engaged in social and public work on to the roll?—Yes, most of them.

Miss *Pickford*.

C696. A suggestion has been put forward for enfranchising the pensioned widows of soldiers who were killed in the War, and also the wives of men who will be voters under the Military qualifications, that is men who have served in the Forces. Has that suggestion been brought to your notice, and, if so, would you like to make any observation on it?—Yes, it has been brought to my notice, but it would hardly apply to the Indian women at all.

C697. There would be very few in Bengal?—There are very few in Bengal, and also in the other Provinces.

C698. Really you have not considered it very much?—No; we have not considered it very much, because we did not think it would serve any useful purpose.

C699. But you do not see any objection to it in principle?—No, not in principle, but if it does not enfranchise quite a number of women we do not see the use of it at all.

Chairman.

C700. Just one question: In the rural areas of Bengal which you know best do the women go to the market town?—(Mrs. *Mukerji*.) Yes.

C701. Does that constitute an occasion which has been used or might be used in order to prosecute political activity amongst women?—I think that might, yes; on a market day you would get the women. Nearly all the women do attend the markets in the villages, and that would be a good idea.

C702. Has there, in fact, been any political activity amongst women of the rural classes in Bengal in the rural areas?—Yes, there has been some. (Mrs. *Sen*.) Yes, quite a lot. (Mrs. *Mukerji*.) In the vernacular paper they seem to be in touch with all the political movements, sometimes even more than the town women you find in some places.

Chairman.] Thank you. We are very greatly obliged to you ladies for helping us this afternoon.

(The Witnesses are directed to withdraw.)

SUB-COMMITTEE

2

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE SUB- COMMITTEE C OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Die Sabbati, 29° Julii, 1933

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