

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SECOND SESSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

Lake Success, New York

Wednesday, 14 January 1948, at 2.15 p.m.

Chairman:	Mrs. Marie Helene LEFAUCHEUX	(France)
Rapporteur:	Mrs. A. KANDALEFT COSMA	(Syria)
Present:	Mrs. J. M. Grey Street	(Australia)
	Mrs. E. I. Uralova	(Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
	Miss C. Zung	(China)
	Mrs. G. Morales de Escheverria	(Costa Rica)
	Mrs. Bodil Begtrup	(Denmark)
	Begum Hamid Ali	(India)
	Mrs. de Castillo Ledon	(Mexico)
	Mrs. E. A. Popova	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
	Miss M. Sutherland	(United Kingdom)
	Miss D. Kenyon	(United States of America)

Representatives from Specialized Agencies

Miss M. Fairchild	(ILO)
Miss J. Maass	(UNESCO)

Observers from Non-Governmental Organizations

Miss T. Sender	(American Federation of Labor)
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Other Observers

Miss M. Bernardino	(Inter-American Commission of Women)
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Secretariat

Mr. John P. Humphrey

Miss L. M. Mitchell

HOW TO INFLUENCE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION IN FAVOUR OF EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN WITH THE PURPOSE OF REMOVING PREJUDICES IN THIS RESPECT: ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN called the Committee's attention to the draft resolution submitted by Mrs. De Escheverria (document E/CN.6/73).

Mrs. DE ESCHEVERRIA (Costa Rica) explained that the aim of her draft resolution was to enable women in countries where the right to vote had been recently granted to profit by the experience of women in other United Nations countries, who had long had that right.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested that the draft resolution might be re-phrased so as to bring out that idea more clearly.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) thought that other resolutions already passed by the Commission covered the point raised by Mrs. De Escheverria.

Mrs. DE ESCHEVERRIA (Costa Rica) stressed that the draft resolution was a direct appeal for help. Women of her own country needed an educational campaign that would assist them in shouldering their new responsibilities.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt that the resolution came more properly under item 5 (c) of the agenda, methods of educating new women voters on the use of the franchise. She recalled that a resolution on that point had been passed by the Commission at its previous session and thought that it might be well to repeat the ideas which it contained.

Mrs. BEGTURUP (Denmark) urged that some means, either official or unofficial, should be found for meeting the opportunity to send a representative to Costa Rica and so to do constructive work in a practical field.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) hoped that when the budgetary situation became easier it might be possible for the Secretary of the Commission to make occasional visits such as the one under discussion. To pass a resolution to that effect at the present time, however, seemed unwise.

She favoured Miss Kenyon's suggestion that the Commission should express its desire to give the greatest possible assistance in educating new women voters on the use of the franchise.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested the following rewording of Mrs. De Escheverria's draft resolution:

"The Commission on the Status of Women requests the Economic and Social Council to permit it to assist the feminine groups which have
/been organized

been organized in those countries where the right to vote has been recently obtained, by helping them in every way possible to acquire the necessary information with a view to the maximum use of the rights recently obtained, including visits to those countries whenever practicable."

At the suggestion of the RAPPORTEUR, Miss KENYON (United States of America) changed the last phrase to read "if and when practicable and requested".

Mrs. STREET (Australia) felt that a resolution in the general terms suggested by Miss Kenyon was unnecessary, for the aims it expressed were plainly basic to the work of the Commission.

She suggested that Costa Rica might itself get into contact with some qualified persons who could assist it, since for financial reasons the Commission would not be able to send a representative.

Begum HAMID ALI (India) did not agree that a country should itself have to seek help from some qualified individual. The important point was to send an accredited representative of the Commission, able to carry out a programme approved by the Commission.

Mrs. BEGTRUP (Denmark) urged the Commission to ask for the money to send a representative on such a worthy mission even if its request would be refused.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought that a second paragraph might be added to the draft resolution, in which a request should be made that a representative of the Commission be sent to Costa Rica.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) feared that all the Latin-American countries in which the women had been recently granted the franchise would make similar requests, and she therefore suggested that the Secretary of the Commission might personally take the Commission's greetings to the next meeting of the International Conference of American States where those Latin-American countries would be represented.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought that Miss Sutherland's suggestion would in no way achieve the aim of giving direct assistance to new women voters.

Mrs. De ESCHEVERRIA (Costa Rica), referring to Miss Kenyon's draft resolution, suggested that the text should state that feminine groups should receive assistance in those countries where women "have obtained or are about to obtain" the right to vote.

DECISION: The Commission adopted the draft resolution as amended.

The CHAIRMAN turned to the draft resolution on an appeal to religious leaders, submitted by the representative of Australia (document E/CN.6/45).

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) thought that it was beyond the competence of the Commission to make a recommendation to religious leaders. Such a recommendation was contrary to the terms of Article 62 of the Charter which specified that recommendations of the Economic and Social Council should be "to the General Assembly, to the Members of the United Nations and to the specialized agencies concerned." Moreover, in many States, the Church and the State were entirely separate.

Miss KENYON (United States of America), supported by the CHAIRMAN, also felt that an appeal should not be made to religious leaders, especially in the form in which it was presented in document E/CN.6/45.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) agreed that some of the phraseology in the draft resolution was inappropriate. She also felt that it was unwise to emphasize one particular aim of the United Nations Charter in addressing religious leaders.

Begum HAMID ALI (India) suggested that consideration of the draft resolution might be postponed until the next session when the idea it contained might be modified. The present plan would not be practicable, especially in certain countries like her own where there would be no official means of communicating the appeal to religious leaders.

Mrs. STREET (Australia), while not wishing to press her resolution, explained that it had not been her purpose that the appeal should be sent directly to the religious leaders but that it should be broadcast and included in the United Nations publications. She could see no objection to asking for the co-operation of religious leaders as a group, just as other groups such as trade unions and women's organizations had been approached. There was no suggestion that the State should in any way be connected with the appeal.

In view of the opposition already expressed, however, Mrs. Street withdrew her draft resolution.

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, Miss MITCHELL (Secretariat) read the following resolution submitted by Mrs. Cosma (Syria):

"The Commission on the Status of Women, noting the little publicity that has been given to the Commission, to its principles, aims and activities; considering the great value of publicity and information for the enlistment of world interest and co-operation;

"RESOLVES to request that an information liaison office be instituted in the Section on the Status of Women, to carry out the task of information and publicity in all its aspects."

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom), supported by Begum HAMID ALI (India), foresaw administrative difficulties if the Commission requested a special information liaison office for its section. All other sections might make

/similar requests.

similar requests. The work of information offices within sections would overlap that of the Department of Public Information. If the Commission were not satisfied with the coverage it was getting, the matter could be handled by better staff work inside the Department of Public Information. She wondered whether the Commission had a right to claim that it had not received its proportionate share of publicity.

The RAPPORTEUR reminded the Commission that in the past certain other activities had received special publicity.

Mrs. BEGTRUP (Denmark) thought the cases referred to by the Rapporteur were of a different nature and usually involved some short-term project like the International Children's Emergency Fund.

The Commission should ask the Economic and Social Council for permission to appoint an advisory group from among its members to do liaison work with the Department of Public Information, as had been suggested at the previous meeting by the Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Public Information.

The CHAIRMAN said that no resolution seemed necessary. The Commission's report might contain a request that a member of the staff of the Department of Public Information should have special responsibility in regard to the Commission's work, and moreover that one or two members of the Commission should be designated as responsible for liaison with the Secretariat in all matters regarding publicity.

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE WORK: ITEM 16 OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN asked for discussion of the report of the Questionnaire Committee (document E/CN.6/67).

Miss KENYON (United States of America), who had served as Chairman of the Questionnaire Committee, explained that the first part of the report was a general statement of the materials which the Commission would like the Secretariat to supply and a brief discussion of methods of obtaining and handling those materials. The second part contained five specific proposals for work during the following year.

The CHAIRMAN expressed approval of the report.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that the report should be considered under item 4 of the agenda, preliminary report based on replies to Part I (Public Law) of Questionnaire on Legal Status and Treatment of Women.

The CHAIRMAN considered that item 4 had been completed, but of course any discussion of Part I of the Questionnaire would be in order.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said that the Questionnaire Committee has assumed that the contents of Part I of the Questionnaire had been thoroughly discussed by the full Commission. The Committee had

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therefore confined itself to discussion of the technique of questionnaires and how the material obtained through questionnaires would affect the programme of future work.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) proposed that the words "by topics" in the first sentence of paragraph C of page 1 of the report of the Questionnaire Committee should be changed to read "under categories of status."

She further proposed that the words "in connection with Questionnaires" should be added after "future work" on the top of page 2, and that paragraph C on page 2 should be deleted. She reserved the right to introduce later, under the item of political rights of women, a resolution broadening the suggestion contained in paragraph C and stating that in the report to the General Assembly any action taken by any Government to remove the inequality between men and women in any field should be included.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested that the words "by topics" in the first sentence of paragraph C on page 1 should be changed to "by subject matter" and that the sentence should then end after the word "analysis". She did not feel that the words "in connection with Questionnaires" should be added in the first sentence on page 2, for each of the five items following was an important project in itself.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) questioned the advisability of seeking information from "individuals able and interested to supply them" (sub-paragraph 3 of the first paragraph on page 1).

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt that the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women and other women's organizations had proved that competent individuals could furnish important information.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) urged that the questionnaires should be shorter and should be sent to Governments in ample time to give them an opportunity to reply.

She thought that the report of the Questionnaire Committee did not reflect accurately the discussion in that Committee. For example, sub-paragraphs 3 and 4 of the first paragraph on page 1 had not been discussed. She could not agree that facts should be sought from "individuals able and interested to supply them", as it would be impossible to check on the accuracy of such information; nor could she agree that it was necessary to list "general research" as a source of securing facts.

In paragraph C on page 1, reference to the Inter-American Commission of Women should be deleted unless it should be decided to refer also to other important women's organizations.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether the other members of the Committee felt that the Committee's report was accurate.

The RAPPORTEUR, Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom), and Miss KENYON (United States of America) recalled that the points mentioned in sub-paragraphs

3 and 4 had been agreed to in the Committee. However, the speed with which the Committee had worked and the language difficulties with which Mrs. Popova had been faced undoubtedly accounted for the fact that she did not remember that part of the discussion.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed to the suggestion by the CHAIRMAN that the Commission's report should mention her reservations in regard to sub-paragraphs 3 and 4.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested a modification of paragraph C on page 2 so that the paragraph would read as follows:

"In line with the resolution presented by Denmark on the political rights of women in the First General Assembly, the memorandum E/CN.6/30 relating to the franchise rights of women and their eligibility to public office prepared by the Secretariat for the Commission should be brought up to date, including reference to action by Governments since the signing of the Charter, and presented to the Third General Assembly, and that similar material be presented annually to succeeding Assemblies until all women throughout the world have the same political rights as men."

Mrs. STREET (Australia) said that Miss Kenyon's suggestion corresponded to the second paragraph of the amendment she had planned to introduce, but she wished to propose an additional paragraph stating that the report to the General Assembly should cover action taken by Governments to grant women equal rights in any field, not merely the political field.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom), supported by Miss KENYON (United States of America), reminded the Commission that it was now planning its work for the following year and that information on women's rights, other than political, was too incomplete to present to the General Assembly. Any report to the Assembly should be the result of careful and complete studies.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) explained that it was not her intention that a report along the broad lines she had suggested in her amendment should be made at once. In reply to Miss Sutherland's fear that the information sent to the General Assembly might not be prepared with sufficient thoroughness, she stated, "that she expected any information released by the Secretariat on the general rights granted to women to be as accurate as that prepared on the political rights of women."

Miss KENYON (United States of America) and Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) called attention to the fact that the Secretariat was asked to report to the Commission on progress made toward equal rights for women in many fields, and that after that information had been presented to the

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Commission, the Commission could itself study it and decide whether or not to present it to the General Assembly.

Mrs. LEDON (Mexico), referring to sub-paragraph 2 of the first paragraph on page 1, proposed that inter-governmental organizations should be added as a source of information.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) asked that the specialized agencies should also be added.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed either the deletion of the reference to the Inter-American Commission of Women in paragraph C on page 1, or the inclusion in that paragraph of reference to the Women's International Democratic Federation and other women's organizations.

The CHAIRMAN and Miss KENYON (United States of America) agreed that it would be better not to refer to any particular organization.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) explained that the intention had not been to single out an organization, but merely to give a concrete example of the point under discussion.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) suggested that the first paragraph on page 1 should end after the words "non-governmental organizations" in sub-paragraph 2.

The CHAIRMAN could see no reason for objecting to mention of inter-governmental organizations and specialized agencies as sources of information.

DECISION: The Commission decided by 10 votes to add the words "inter-governmental organizations and specialized agencies" to sub-paragraph 2 of the first paragraph and to delete the entire last sentence of paragraph C on page 1.
The Commission adopted the report of the Questionnaire Committee with the two amendments on page 1 and the amendment to paragraph C on page 2 proposed by Miss Kenyon.

At the suggestion of Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) and with the approval of the Committee, the CHAIRMAN announced that in its report to the Economic and Social Council, the Commission would include the report of the Questionnaire Committee in its amended form and a statement of the reservations made by Mrs. Popova.

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution submitted by Mrs. Ledon (document E/CN.6/39), requesting the Economic and Social Council to provide the Commission with more adequate means of obtaining information with regard to discrimination on account of sex, and thereafter to prepare a Convention on the subject.

/The resolution

The resolution was adopted by 12 votes.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES (ITEM 11 (b) OF THE AGENDA)

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution submitted by Miss Kenyon (document E/CN.6/56) concerning the place where the next session of the Commission should be held.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Commission that Dr. Malik, representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, had advised her that his Government would be prepared to invite the Commission to hold its next session in Lebanon. She proposed to add to document E/CN.6/56 the Commission's thanks to Dr. Malik and a request to the Economic and Social Council that the Commission might be permitted to accept the invitation.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) and Mrs. BEGIRUP (Denmark) welcomed the Lebanese invitation.

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) proposed the deletion from the first paragraph of the draft resolution of the words: "in some area where problems arising from discrimination tend to be acute".

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested that the paragraph should be amended to read: "to hold occasional sessions of the Commission in different areas of the world".

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), while welcoming the invitation of the Lebanese Government, did not think the Commission should take a specific decision at once on the place of its next session.

Mrs. BEGIRUP (Denmark) thought that the resolution should specify the 1949 session even if the place was not mentioned.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt that a specific proposal was more likely to be accepted by the Economic and Social Council.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Commission to vote on the draft resolution, which mentioned no particular country but merely expressed the Commission's desire to meet in 1949 in the Near East.

The draft resolution was adopted by 8 votes.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Commission's thanks to Dr. Malik and the expression of its desire to accept the invitation of the Lebanese Government should be included in its report.

The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 8 votes.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF THE COMMISSION TO THE OTHER ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 70 OF THE CHARTER (ITEM 15 OF THE AGENDA)

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution submitted by Miss Sutherland (document E/CN.6/46) regarding co-operation between the Social Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) thought that it would be premature for a member of the Commission to attend meetings of the Social Commission.

/The studies

The studies that were being carried out were still at an early stage, and contact between the two Commissions could quite well be at the Secretariat level for the time being; but in view of the nature of those studies the Secretary-General might usefully be asked to keep the Commission on the Status of Women informed of the progress of the Social Commission's work, and the Social Commission might be invited when necessary to refer to the Commission on the Status of Women, for consideration, any aspects of its work which might profitably be examined from the point of view of women's rights. It might be useful if the Social Commission would include in its agenda an item "Questions to be referred to the Commission on the Status of Women for its observations".

The Commission might at a later date consider asking that one of its members should attend meetings of the Social Commission.

In reply to a question by Mrs. BEGRUP (Denmark), Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) added that at its next session the Social Commission would have before it the Secretariat's comments on the League of Nations Conventions on the Traffic in Women and Children, which would be of great interest to the Commission on the Status of Women.

The CHAIRMAN supported Miss Sutherland's proposal, subject to a drafting change in the third paragraph. She asked Miss Sutherland to replace "Requests the Secretary-General..." by "Recommends to the Economic and Social Council to request the Secretary-General...". The Commission was not empowered to request the Secretariat to take action except through the Economic and Social Council.

Mrs. LEDON (Mexico) had declared at the General Assembly that it was the desire of the Commission on the Status of Women that the Social Commission should maintain contact with it. The Social Commission was about to study the form in which it would redraft some of the Conventions on the Traffic in Women and Children, a question which was of great interest to the Commission on the Status of Women. She supported Miss Sutherland's proposal.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) observed that the question of contacts with different bodies was a very complicated and difficult one; and particularly so at the beginning, before a pattern had been worked out. There would have to be different methods of representation with different types of bodies. Arrangements for co-operation with the specialized agencies were already incorporated in agreements. If the Commission were to attempt to be represented at meetings of the two Councils and the numerous Commissions whenever matters concerning women's interests should arise, it would find itself in difficulties: first, the cost would be very great; secondly, it would be difficult to find the person or persons who would be

able to attend all those meetings.

The draft resolution was adopted by 10 votes.

The Commission then turned to a draft resolution on representation on organs and agencies, submitted by Mrs. Street (document E/CN.6/49).

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) suggested that in the third line of the last paragraph, the words "at least" should be omitted.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) thought the reference to the Social Commission could be deleted, as the question of co-operation with that Commission had already been decided. It was of great importance for the Commission on the Status of Women to be represented at meetings of the other organs mentioned in the draft resolution. It was impossible to foresee when questions concerning the status of women would arise in the course of a debate. The inclusion of matters of concern to women in the Declaration of Human Rights had been largely due to the presence of two representatives of the Commission at the meetings of the Human Rights Commission.

The final paragraph should be omitted, as it dealt with another subject.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that if each Commission of the United Nations wished to be represented at meetings of all other Commissions, complete confusion would be the result. The Commission should concentrate on its own work. It was important to be represented on the International Labour Organization, but it would be useless to ask for representation on the Trusteeship Council.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought it would be advisable to deal separately with relations with Councils, Commissions and specialized agencies, for each of which the Charter made different provisions. The last paragraph of the draft resolution on the ILO submitted by the Committee on Resolutions (document E/CN.6/63) was precise and to the point, and conformed with the terms of the agreement.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) agreed. Existing agreements must be respected.

The Commission agreed by 9 votes to consider first paragraph VI of document E/CN.6/63.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), supported by Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed the inclusion of the WFTU in the resolution.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) pointed out that Article 70 of the Charter, to which the paragraph in question referred, did not cover non-governmental agencies.

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the two questions must be considered separately. Mrs. Uralova, if she wished to do so, could submit another resolution

/concerning

concerning representation of the Commission on non-governmental organizations.

The Commission decided, by nine votes, to consider separately the questions of participation in debates of specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Paragraph VI of document E/CN.6/63 was adopted by 9 votes.

After a brief exchange of views, the Commission decided that a study of the records of its discussions and the resolution on the IIO, which would be annexed to the report, would be a sufficient guide to its representative.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) submitted the following draft resolution:

"The Commission on the Status of Women requests the Economic and Social Council to arrange for reciprocal representation between the World Federation of Trade Unions and the Commission on the Status of Women, so that the Commission may be represented at meetings of the WFTU with the right to participate without vote in the deliberations on subjects involving the rights of women and to give the Commission as a whole the opportunity to familiarize itself with the documents issued, documents which are of interest in the question of women's rights."

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) considered that it would be most inadvisable to single out for special mention one of the eight non-governmental organizations having consultative status. The relations between the Economic and Social Council and its Commissions on the one hand, and the non-governmental organizations on the other, were laid down by resolutions of the Council, which nowhere provided for representation of the Council or its Commissions at meetings of the non-governmental organizations.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported Mrs. Uralova's draft resolution.

Miss SENDER (American Federation of Labor) pointed out that the proposal called for reciprocal representation, but that the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions was laid down, together with that of many other organizations, including the American Federation of Labor.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) opposed the draft resolution.

The draft resolution was rejected by 2 votes to 7.

The CHAIRMAN requested the Commission to take a decision on Mrs. Street's draft resolution on representation on organs and agencies (document E/CN.6/49).

Mrs. STREET (Australia), in view of the decisions already taken, felt that her resolution might be amended to refer only to relations with the Commission on Human Rights and UNESCO.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the same resolution could not cover relations with UNESCO, which was a specialized agency, and with the Commission on Human Rights, which was a Commission of the United Nations.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) suggested adopting the same wording to describe the Commission's relations with UNESCO as had been used for the ILO.

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read paragraph VI of document E/CN.6/63, substituting "UNESCO" for "ILO".

The proposal was adopted by 8 votes.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) read her draft resolution (E/CN.6/49) as amended to refer only to the Human Rights Commission, and with paragraph 3 omitted. She felt that it was important to retain the proviso contained in paragraph 2.

In reply to a question by Mrs. Popova, Mrs. Street added that, subject to the agreement of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission could nominate one of its members to represent it at meetings of the Commission on Human Rights.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Commission was considering the principle of representation; the proposal did not specify its terms.

The draft resolution as amended was adopted by 8 votes.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.
