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Yerran's

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WOMAN SUFFRAGE WAS DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE

Hon. Dr. Roberts Aily Champions the Rights of the Fair Sex to Exercise the Franchise--Strong Arguments Advanced--Bill was Referred to the Committee On Law Practice.

Hon. Dr. Roberts' bill to amend the Elections Act, better known as the Woman Suffrage bill, came up in the Legislature yesterday and was discussed before crowded galleries. The only speaker was Hon. Dr. Roberts, who is fathering the measure, and at the conclusion of his remarks a motion to refer the bill to the law committee for an opinion was put and carried.

Hon. Mr. Roberts' Speech.

Mr. Roberts said that the question of granting equal suffrage to women had been receiving the attention of governments and peoples for many years and Canada was no exception. The women of Canada for decades have been tilling the soil of public sentiment and sowing the seed, and that there has been an abundant harvest is shown by the fact that British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba have granted the franchise to women. In Ontario it was enacted as a government measure. Conservative England which began to create an army after the war began, has become sufficiently democratic to support the measure which this Legislature is now being asked to approve.

Personally it was a source of great satisfaction to him to be able to present the bill to the House. He had conferred with Hon. members on the subject and some showed a tendency to scoff at the idea of extending the franchise to women. He trusted that what he would say on the subject might change their sentiments on the question. The claim of women to share in the conduct of national and political life by means of the ballot is a just one. When use is made of such terms as "government by the people" and "the voice of the people" it is patent that it is a bit hypocritical. Such high sounding phrases when used in connection with political affairs are really false pretenses, for only the male half of the population meant. These phrases should either be revised or made to convey the full truth and apply to women as well as men. Women now have the privilege of paying taxes, of obeying laws, of working for a living, but are denied the privilege of casting a ballot. He held that this could not be justified by any process of reasoning or principle of justice. The exclusion of women was purely class legislation unworthy of the twentieth century and a weak spot in our much vaunted progress. The Good Book tells us "God created man in His own image . . . Male and female created He them" and "let them have dominion over all the earth." Equally

created in God's image, having equal dominion at the beginning, how is it that woman is now denied her share in that equality? In justice what has wrongly been taken from her should be restored.

Economic Benefits.

Referring to the social and economic benefits to be derived from acceding to the claims of women the speaker held that it was true that woman's sphere was the home, but a fatal mistake was made in defining home as the dwelling place occupied by her and her family. Home is wherever the woman's influence dominates, and as the members of her family are separated from her at school, at work, or abroad, her influence goes with them, and this in the larger sense is home. She is interested in the environments in which her family is placed, and she will exert every influence to make these environments conducive to the happiness and well being of her family. Women today are interested in factory conditions, they are interested in the moral and sanitary conditions of the schools, and the moral and social environment of our industrial centers. Just as in a well balanced home so can men and women working together give a better government to men, women and children than men alone. It used to be considered a fatal blow to the home and social order to give a young lady an education, and the argument was made today that if a woman had a vote she might neglect the home. The bugbear of educating woman has been put down and why should we not be afraid of enfranchising her? Give the woman a say in political matters and automatically we raise the political standards among men. A nation which holds woman in servitude and ignorance is bound to remain low in the scale of civilization. A glance over the world reveals the truth of this statement. Someone would say that it was just his point of view. If the high standing of our women is so vital to the world introduced into the unhealthy atmosphere of modern politics. Women are already face to face with the sordidness of vice, with the sights of human failure and weaknesses with greed and all the excruciations of our social conditions. Politics are but a reflection of these conditions, and should these conditions be allowed to exist and it thus be made necessary for women to face them as they have to at present?

Should Have Franchise.

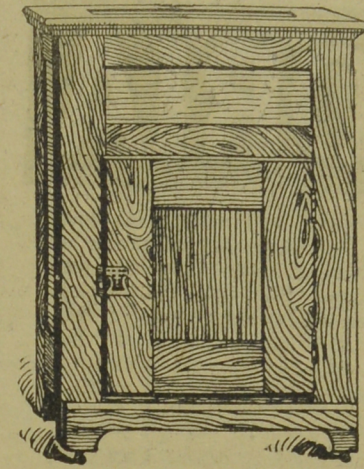
It might be said that women do not want the vote but he, (Roberts) would like some assurance that anyone making that statement had been given the right to speak for the women. Granted that some women do not want to vote was that any reason why the vote should be denied to the women of the country?

Many men, as the returns from any election will show, do not care enough for their franchise to use it, but because they failed to exercise it it was not taken from them. It has taken many years of education to interest men in the exercise of their privilege and if the franchise were given to women prejudice and misunderstanding would soon disappear and women would use the power given them. It has also been urged that the surroundings of the polling station would offend the finer senses of women, but no objection was made to them paying their taxes and meeting with all classes and creeds while they were doing so. Why then would they be contaminated if meeting these same taxpayers at the polling booth? If the manner of conducting elections is so bad that it is not fit for women to come in contact with it is clearly time such manner was changed.

Objections Answered.

The argument that the polling booth may harm the women is a stronger condemnation of the methods in use there than it is against granting the vote to women. Some people contended that to give women a vote would make her neglect her home. He had a higher opinion of women than that. The same thing was urged as a reason for refusing women education, but experience had proved the falsity of the charge. Women were praised for their interest in the religious and philanthropic societies. Interest in those things does not make women neglect their homes, then how could the attendance of a woman for a few moments each four of five years at the

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polling booth make them neglectful of their other duties. Fear has been expressed in some quarters of the consequences of a married woman having a vote as well as her husband. If women rule the home as it is said then this double vote is of inestimable benefit for causes of reform, improvement of health, morals, education, etc., will have two votes to support them where now they have only one. But someone says if husband and wife differed in politics it would bring strife into the home. Why anyone than a difference in political views between father and son, and if a husband and wife have no differences in views on any subject but politics then a lively discussion every four or five years will be good for both of them.

Some persons also seem to fear that if women got the vote they would go into politics. Of all men voters how many go into politics. Was not the struggle rather to get men to take a genuine and personal interest in politics. There was no need to have any fear for the women on that score. If a few women should go into politics then so much the better for politics. Other people contended that to give women the franchise would increase the ignorant vote. Then if that was the case what was the use of schools. A male foreigner ignorant of our language, laws, customs and national life, gets a vote after three years' residence because he is a "man." Would hon. gentlemen class their mothers, wives and sisters with such men as these? Would they say that college graduates, school teachers, nurses, business and professional women were more ignorant than foreigners? If they would be honest with themselves they would not. Women didn't want petticoat rule any more than men and woman suffrage would not bring this about. It would only give them their right to share in the responsibility for and the decision as to how the country should be governed.

Political Expediency.

Another consideration in granting the franchise to women was political expediency. The influence of the vast majority of women is on the side of advancement and improvement in moral and social conditions and the politician interested in bringing that about would find the women's vote a source of power. There are interests at work against all methods of reform by which even the best intentioned politician is handicapped. Give him the addition of the influence of the women's vote and he would be independent. For the reasons given—justice, social and political benefits—the granting of the franchise to women should be no longer refused. To admit the extra power that the women's share in public affairs would give and the progress of the province would be second to none in advancement, enlightenment, physical and moral health with all the material benefits that follow from them.

The many friends of Mr. J. Howe Dickson, K. C., clerk of the executive council, will regret to learn that he is confined to his home by illness.

MR. POTTS' RESOLUTION DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE

(Continued from page 2.)

magnificent example of the statesmen of the old land in forming a national government. Unfortunately the broad spirit visible in the Mother Country was not observable in Canada. The divergence of opinion which had become noticeable recently was because the party in power was a little too late with its proposal. To give time for other matters, he moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. J. A. Murray Explains.

Before the motion was put, Mr. J. A. Murray, leader of the Opposition, rose and explained that he had not intended to convey the impression that a sinister influence had been brought to bear upon the leader of the government to induce him to move his amendment. If such an impression had been created, it was through his inability properly to express himself. He had meant that the moving of the amendment was an action foreign to the nature of the leader of the government, and had been due to influence brought to bear from a certain source.

Hon. Mr. Veniot said that he would

Hon. Mr. Veniot Replies.

Hon. Mr. Veniot said that he would accept the explanation of the hon. leader of the opposition. However, he had taken down verbatim his words. They were "must have been impelled by a sinister influence within his party." He was prepared to accept the explanation, but would have to say that at the time the words were uttered he took them as referring to members placed as he (Veniot) was.

Hon. Mr. Murray said that that construction was entirely foreign to his meaning. He was glad that the Hon. Attorney General had criticized him in that particular as it gave him an opportunity of making clear his meaning.

The motion to adjourn the debate was then carried.

OF SOCIAL INTEREST.

Mrs. Porter of Andover, is spending a few days in the city. She is a guest at Windsor Hall.

Mrs. J. W. McCready is visiting relatives at Norton.

The Onagwakade Chapter, I. O. O. E., is giving a patriotic bridge this afternoon in the K. of P. hall.

Mrs. A. H. Grimmer of St. Andrews, is visiting her mother, Mrs. G. N. Babbitt, University avenue.

Mrs. Wood received yesterday at Glen Isla House. Mrs. O. S. Crockett and Mrs. A. J. Gregory poured and Miss Margaret Black and Miss Nora Thompson served the guests.

Miss C. O. McGivern of St. John, is in the city.

Late Helen K. McGinnis.

The funeral of the late Helen K. McGinnis took place Wednesday morning from the late home of the deceased. The funeral was largely attended and the service at St. Dunstan's church was particularly impressive. Rev. Father Carney made particular reference to the excellent qualities of the deceased young girl who had been cut off in early life. The mourners were James McGinnis, John McGinnis, Leo McGinnis, Fred McGinnis, Joseph McGinnis, Gregory McGinnis, John McGinnis, Thomas McGinnis, James A. Hughes and Joseph Cain. There were numerous floral tributes and mass cards. Interment was made at the Hermitage.