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Fredericton, August 17, 1920.

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SHOULD WOMEN HAVE OWN POLITICAL PARTY

The Question was a Live One in England in 1918, When Women Got the Franchise—The Idea is Now Disapproved in the Old Country—Prominent Women Give Expression to Their Views.

(By Lydia Kingsmill Commander, staff correspondent of Cross-Atlantic Newspaper Service, Inc.)

London, Oct. 16—Should there be a Women's Party? This question was a live one in 1918, when English women got the vote. Now it is being discussed all over again, in connection with the newly enfranchised women of America.

English women tried the Women's Party. It was organized by Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter, Christabel, who had given such fiery devotion to the Votes for Women's cause. For a time the Women's Party had flourishing officers, a long roll of members and held a successful series of big public meetings. Apparently, however, it did not meet the women's need, for it has fallen away. Its offices are closed. Mrs. Pankhurst has not been in England for about two years. Miss Christobel Pankhurst is not in the public eye, and the Women's Party is principally a memory.

In regard to the Women's Party

idea, public women here seem unanimous in disapproval, the feeling being that such a course perpetuates the sex division in political life which has been so detrimental in the past, and which it is hoped votes for women will overcome. Naturally, Englishwomen refuse to give advice to their American cousins, of whose ability and good judgment they entertain the highest opinion. They will speak of English conditions or of the general principle but they will not tell American women what they ought to do.

Lady Astor's Idea

Lady Astor, M. P., has from the first worked with the existing party, of her political persuasion, and she firmly believes that is the way to get the best results.

"My instinct and reason," she says, "are opposed on principle to the formation of a separate Women's Party. We have had several centuries of sex legislation, not altogether a success. The line of progress and of reform in all countries seems to me to be in joining

forces with the existing party organizations and in trying to make our influence effective in them."

"Women who want to go into Parliament must attach themselves to one of the political parties," is the opinion of Mrs. Abbott, of the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance, which met this summer in Geneva.

"When they do so, they hope to leaven the lump. But it would take an archangel out of heaven not to make bargains when once a candidate becomes a member of Parliament."

"Therefore, in my view, it will not be a bad thing if there remains outside the existing political parties a body of women who will not bargain. For this reason I will be glad to see some women outside party politics, who will vote according to the merits of candidates."

Dr. Marion Phillips, speaking as a member of the Labor Party, says: "It is our very strong opinion that it would be a disastrous state of affairs if women were organized in a party of their own."

"We have always been specifically against women's parties, and also against those organizations or women which, although ostensibly non-party, through their weight against the Labor Party."

Miss E. Macadam, hon. secretary National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, thinks women should work in the regular parties, and for the interests of their own sex. She says: "When the Representation of the People Bill passed, giving women the vote, our union continued to exist on a non-party basis. We encouraged our women members to join their own political parties, that is, the party which their own studying and thinking have convinced them is the best one."

"Then we suggested that, once inside a party, the women shall do all they can to influence that party when women's questions crop up."

"For instance, our members, inside a certain party, might press for the following points in our own program: Votes for women under 30, who are at present disfranchised."

Equal rights for fathers and mothers regarding their children.

More women for Parliament.

Equal opportunities for women and equal pay for equal work.

"We have not the least desire to help in the formation of a women's party. We want men and women to work together and, as a matter of fact, we have men members and men on our executive committee."

Miss Christine Maguire, organizing secretary of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries, doesn't want women to work by themselves and be selfish. She says:

"A Women's Party would be rather selfish. I know that some of the existing parties might be accused of being men's parties alone working for the exclusive interests of men. Women do not want to copy that idea. But I think each party ought to have a women's section."

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