

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

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To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom; to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it; to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

## THE OUTLOOK.

As we informed our readers last week, the Conciliation Committee were not satisfied with the answer given by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons with regard to facilities for the Woman Suffrage Bill, and further, they realised that that statement was ambiguous in many important respects. Accordingly Lord Lytton, the chairman, addressed to Mr. Asquith a letter asking for more information—in particular, he expressed a wish to know whether the Government intended to construe the limitation to a week of Parliamentary time strictly; what facilities would be given to the Committee for

using the modern forms of the Closure which have been found necessary in the case of other Bills to prevent obstruction and whether opportunities would be provided for securing the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule. To this letter Mr. Asquith has replied that he will give an answer after consultation with his colleagues.

### Statement by Sir Edward Grey.

In the meanwhile an important pronouncement has been made by Sir Edward Grey in explanation of the Government's position. Speaking at the banquet to Mr. Andrew Carnegie, Sir Edward Grey prefaced his remarks by a reference to the question of Woman Suffrage. His statement, which will be found on page 592, dealt with the charge made against the Government and the House of Commons of trifling with this question. He said:—

The time having now come that a definite opportunity has been promised to the House of Commons, it is important that people interested in the subject should understand that that is a real opportunity, and that neither on the part of the Government, which makes it, nor on the part of the House of Commons, which accepts it, is it a bogus offer.

He then proceeded to deal with two "misconceptions" with regard to the Government offer. The first related to the length of time available for the three later stages of the Bill—Committee, Report, and Third Reading. Assuming that one week proved sufficient for the Committee stage but insufficient for the Report and Third Reading in addition, would the Government intervene to prevent the Bill being carried? Sir Edward Grey answered his own question in the following way:—

The Government are not pledged to more than a week, but to suppose that if the House of Commons in a week showed

itself to have a combined, determined majority, substantial and united, anxious to proceed with the Bill, the Government would then use all its Whips and machinery to prevent the two days more being used, is an unreasonable interpretation of their offer.

He dealt further with the question of the employment of the Closure as follows:—

The intention, of course, is that those who are interested in the Bill should have a fair chance of defending themselves by the means which the rules of the House place at the disposal of majorities for defending themselves against obstruction and making progress.

Sir Edward Grey concluded by calling upon supporters of the Bill to devote the next twelve months to working so that next year might see their hopes realised.

### Press Comments.

The *Manchester Guardian*, in a leading article, given in full on page 592 of this issue, comments on this pronouncement by Sir Edward Grey as follows:—

We thank Sir Edward Grey for this word, and there are millions of men and women who will thank him for it. The one thing which has most bred bitterness in this strife has been the feeling of women that they were being put off and deluded—that their claim was not so much resisted as for ever postponed and evaded. Sir Edward Grey's words will for the first time give them assurance and confidence. They will look to him to make them good, and of all men in public life he can perhaps be best trusted to do so.

The *Liverpool Courier*, in attributing the advance made in recent years to the "resolute impertunity" and "heroic sacrifices" of the women, expresses the opinion that Woman Suffrage has now "surmounted almost the last obstacle to its certain fulfilment," and proceeds:—

When Mr. Lloyd George announced that the Government were prepared to give a week of next session for the Woman's Suffrage Bill, he left doubts as to whether the promise was a substantial concession or a mockery. A hard and fast drawn week of Parliamentary time would be of no avail against the resources of Parliamentary obstruction. It is notable that Sir Edward Grey has taken the first opportunity of publicly dispelling any doubt or misgiving.

Public opinion has a year's grace in which to form and declare itself. If there is, as alleged, a great majority of the

















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