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		STRAND	
KENSINGTON	{ North South	SOUTHWARK	{ West Rotherhithe Bermondsey
		WANDSWORTH	

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MARYLEBONE, WEST.—Mrs. STEPHEN SPRING-RICE, 1, Bryanston Place, W.
WANDSWORTH.—Miss HILL and Miss GEORGINA HILL, 87, East Hill, Wandsworth.

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National Society for Women's Suffrage.

OCCASIONAL PAPER,

*Issued by the Central Committee, 10, Great College Street,
Westminster.*

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JUNE 1st, 1891.

London:
JOHN BALE & SONS,
WOMEN'S PRINTING OFFICE, 87-89, GT. TITCHFIELD STREET,
OXFORD STREET, W.

1891

NOTES OF THE SESSION.

The Central Committee consider that it may be useful and desirable to present to their friends and subscribers a brief narrative of the events of the past few weeks, especially the circumstances which led up to the loss of the day for the second reading of the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill.

It was generally understood that Mr. Woodall had obtained a first place for the Parliamentary Franchise Extension to Women Bill on May 13th. Fears were, however, entertained that this date might be absorbed by the Whitsuntide holidays. Mr. Haldane subsequently obtained a place for a resolution on the question on April 24th. It thus appeared that a debate either on Bill or resolution was ensured during the Session.

A vote on a resolution is, however, no more than the expression of an abstract opinion; the Central Committee, therefore, had, early in the Session, resolved to leave no effort untried to secure a division on the Bill rather than a resolution, and to this end a memorial, with many influential signatures appended, had been prepared, and a request made to the First Lord of the Treasury to receive this at the hands of a small deputation of ladies. Mr. W. H. Smith named April 20th as the date on which to receive the deputation, which was introduced by Viscount Wolmer, M.P., and consisted of Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Emily Davies, and Miss Helen Blackburn.

Mr. W. H. SMITH, in acknowledging the memorial presented by the deputation, gave the assurance that the House would not adjourn until after May 13th, and that, unforeseen contingencies apart, the Government

had no intention of taking the day for Government business.

The Parliamentary Committee met later in the same day, when the result of the deputation was communicated to them. The following members were present: Mr. Ainslie, Col. Cotton-Jodrell, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mr. Sydney Gedge, Mr. Haldane, Capt. Edwards Heathcote, Mr. Johnstone, Sir Rainald Knightley, Mr. Lafone, Mr. McLaren, Mr. Round, Sir Richard Temple, Sir Edward Watkin, Mr. Alfred Webb, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Woodall.

On hearing the tenour of Mr. Smith's reply, it was agreed to proceed with the Bill, and Mr. Haldane accordingly withdrew his resolution.

The various Women's Suffrage Committees at once commenced preparations for vigorous work in view of a division on May 13th. The opponents were equally on the alert; notice to move that the Bill be read that day six months appeared on the papers of the House from no less than four different members, viz., Mr. Radcliffe Cooke (Newington, West), Mr. de Lisle (Leicestershire, Mid.), Mr. Samuel Smith (Flint.), Mr. Asquith (Fife, East), and schemes were laid for its destruction.

On April 30th, Mr. Smith moved that certain specified days should be appropriated to Government business. Mr. Gladstone immediately rose to lead the Opposition, but instead of objecting, as is usually the case, to the time of private members being appropriated, he insisted that Mr. Smith should be 'perfectly uniform in the application of his rule,' and include all Wednesdays before Whitsuntide. Mr. Gladstone's proposal afforded a manifest opening for shelving the Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women, which the opponents of the measure were quick to perceive. A debate of nearly an hour followed, of which a full report is given in these pages. Mr. Smith declared himself unable to take the day for Government business after the expectations which had been aroused. Mr. Stuart and Mr. Bryce thereupon pressed the claim of Wednesday the

8th to be equally exempted for the Access to Mountains Bill. Mr. Labouchere scouted the idea of giving a day to "female franchise, or some folly of that sort." Mr. Courtney defended Mr. Smith's proposal. Finally Sir Henry James moved an amendment to take all days to Whitsuntide. This was opposed by Lord Wolmer, supported by Sir Wm. Harcourt, and finally carried by a division of 218 to 159; and thus the Government, for probably the first time in Parliamentary history, had a day forced upon them.

The division list, which is given on another page, is worthy of careful study. By that list we find that there voted

	Majority.	Minority.
Conservatives,	79	128
Liberal Unionists,	25	13
Gladstonian Liberals,	90	27
Nationalists,	25	2
	218	159

and more than this, we find that fourteen known opponents, including several members of the Government, voted in the minority to give a fair opportunity of discussion of the question, while eighty-six who were supposed to be friends voted in the majority, viz., twenty-six Conservatives, one Liberal Unionist, forty Gladstonian Liberals, thirteen Nationalists.

Further, the absence of many steady friends is also to be noted, due to the snatch nature of the vote, and showing that the division, however instructive, is not decisive of the genuine opinion of the House of Commons.

There is at least one member whose courageous consistency should be fully recognised. When Mr. Haldane placed his resolution on the paper, Mr. de Lisle gave notice to move as an amendment to leave out all after "that" and insert "the exclusion of women from voting in elections of Members of Parliament is beneficial to the peace and prosperity of the

State, being in accord with the fundamental principle of the good government of mankind; and that the laws now in force regulating the election of town and county councils and other local representative bodies require examination in order to determine whether the legal qualifications of women are in accord with the natural."

Mr. Samuel Smith and Mr. Radcliffe Cooke also gave notices of amendments.

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.

House of Commons, Thursday, April 30th.

THE BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I wish to put a question to the leader of the House, the answer to which may in a certain sense, I think, possibly tend to shorten the conversation upon the motion which the right hon. gentleman is about to make. First of all, is it his intention to ask for the particular preference he desires to have on behalf of the Irish Land Bill exclusively; and, secondly, is it his intention to apply the power which he seeks to obtain without making any exception in favour of any particular measure, so that it shall be perfectly equal in its application?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I appreciate the spirit in which the right hon. gentleman has put the question. The preference which we ask for has reference to the Irish Land Bill at the present time. We conceive that that Bill should be pressed forward with all reasonable speed. It has unfortunately lagged greatly in Committee during the last few days. I suppose the question of the right hon. gentleman is directed specially to the Wednesdays. So far as other days of the week are concerned, we do not propose to make any exception whatever. The Government do not think it would be possible to make an exception in favour of one motion or proposal without making an exception in favour of others, so far as Wednesdays are concerned. One difficulty in which we are placed is that an hon. gentleman opposite had a motion on the paper for last Friday, and removed it under the impression that I had given a pledge that the 13th of May should be reserved for its consideration. I did not give that pledge. I did not give that pledge unreservedly; I merely stated that, so far as the Government were concerned, they would not propose that there should be an adjournment for Whitsuntide before that Wednesday; and if no unforeseen event occurred they would not propose to take that day. However, it has been translated into a pledge, and therefore I am afraid I should

not be able to take that day for Government business. After Whitsuntide there are Bills of private members which would be in progress, and under Standing Order No. 12 those Bills would be entitled to precedence before any other orders. But it would be a strong measure on my part to deprive those Bills of the position they have obtained until absolute necessity compels me to do so. It would be held to be exercising the rights of the majority rather severely upon hon. gentlemen who had charge of other Bills, and therefore it is not the intention of the Government to take the first three or four Wednesdays after Whitsuntide so far as Bills in progress are concerned. Therefore it comes to this. The proposition of the Government is that the time of the House shall be given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, without reservation, for the Land Purchase Bill. Next Wednesday shall be given for that purpose, but the first three or four Wednesdays after Whitsuntide will not be given until fair progress has been made with the Bills which are in Committee.

Mr. J. STUART asked whether it was open to the right hon. gentleman to reconsider the decision to take next Wednesday, when a most important Bill was down.

Mr. BRYCE inquired whether, seeing the right hon. gentleman took a night in February last, on which he had a motion down with reference to the access to mountains in Scotland, he did not intend to make an exception now in favour of that motion, which was down for May 8.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: It would, I think, be more convenient that I should enter into these questions, in regard to which I have had more notices than one, when I make the motion for precedence. I express my regret if by any motion of mine I have deprived the right hon. gentleman of any opportunity of bringing forward his motion.

The SPEAKER then, upon formal notice from the First Lord of the Treasury, proceeded to read the motion on the paper, but, in response to Opposition cries of "Move,"

Mr. W. H. SMITH again rose and moved, "That, whenever the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill is appointed for Tuesday or Friday the House do meet at 3 o'clock, and that the proceedings on that Bill have precedence over all orders of the day and notices of motion; and that the said Bill have precedence on Wednesday, if it be appointed for that day." He then proceeded to describe the obstruction to which the Irish Land Purchase Bill had been subject.

Mr. GLADSTONE, after commenting on the general business affected by the motion, added: There is only one other point on which I wish to say a word, and that is with regard to the reference which the right hon. gentleman made to me in connection with next Wednesday. He said that if I expressed a certain opinion with regard to next Wednesday he would not be disposed to take it. I am disposed to speak in the opposite sense. If the right hon. gentleman thinks it necessary to interfere with the course of business in the House and with the rights of private members, particularly in circumstances so remarkable as these, when he has taken

the night of the motion of my hon. friend the member for Aberdeen, in which so much interest is taken in Scotland, in my opinion his only safety is to insist on that on which he has often insisted on previous occasions, and to be perfectly uniform in the application of his rule. I do not look to the contents of the Bills, or to anything that may be called a matter of immediate urgency which I might conceive would be a possible subject for exception, but, taking these measures as measures, they are all well entitled to discussion, and I think the motion of my hon. friend the member for Aberdeen is better entitled than any other motion, on account of what has formerly happened. I may press on her Majesty's Government that they should not make two bites at a cherry, but should make a fair and uniform practice, and therefore avoid all occasion for giving ground for special complaint on the part of those who may be interested in any particular measure.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Am I to understand that the right hon. gentleman is inviting me to take all Wednesdays after Whitsuntide?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I thought that we were discussing absolutely the question of all days until Whitsuntide, and then after that of the days on which the Land Purchase Bill was down.

Mr. LABOUCHERE, who was received with ironical cheers, said that as the right hon. gentleman was in a somewhat prophetic mood as to what was going to take place in the present year, he was sorry that he had not said when there was going to be a dissolution. With regard to the motion of the right hon. gentleman, it seemed to him that he was always expected to play lamb to the right hon. gentleman's wolf. The right hon. gentleman turned on him as if he were the *fons et origo* of all obstruction in the House. In one sense he was—in the right sense of the word obstruction. The Conservative party and Ministers had extraordinary notions as to the duties of that House. He further objected to the proposal of the Government to take the time of private members, because it introduced a new element into the demands on the public time. By means of it Ministers were able to say in effect what Bills they approved or disapproved. They would take one Wednesday when Bills which they disapproved were to be brought on, but not the next, because then a Bill favoured by their supporters was to be brought on—a Bill about female franchise or some folly of that sort. In those matters let them at least be fair. What was sauce for the gander was sauce for the goose also. Let the Government take all the Wednesdays or none.

Mr. BRYCE moved an amendment to except Friday, the 8th of May, from the operation of the resolution. He said he could understand the action of the right hon. gentleman if it had been uniform, but to select days in a particular way and practically in favour of particular Bills was scarcely fair to the House. He should not have moved his amendment if the right hon. gentleman had taken all the time of private members, and if he had not intimated that the Government would not take Wednesday, the 13th; but under the circumstances he felt bound in duty to his constituents and to the people of Scotland to take the course he had done.

Mr. COURTNEY said the hon. member for Aberdeen had candidly confessed that his principal motive of action was to except Wednesday, the 13th of May, not that he loved the Access to Mountains Bill so much as he hated the Women's Franchise Bill.

Mr. BRYCE said that what he stated was that he desired absolute equality in the matter.

Mr. COURTNEY said the hon. member distinctly stated that he should not have moved his amendment if the right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had not intimated that he would not take Wednesday, the 13th. Therefore, he had not unfairly interpreted what the hon. member said. Now, as to the question that was to come on on the 13th of May. Last Friday week the first notice of amendment on going into Committee of Supply stood in the name of the hon. member for Haddington relative to the political disabilities of women. That could not have been brought on if the Bill of the 13th of May still stood on the paper, and it was a question with those members interested in the subject whether that motion should be proceeded with or whether the chance of the 13th of May should be retained. A deputation went to the right hon. gentleman to ascertain the intentions of the Government with respect to that day, and the right hon. gentleman had frankly repeated what he said to the deputation—that it was not intended to adjourn the House before the 13th of May, and that in the absence of unforeseen circumstances the Government had no intention to take that day. Well, had anything unforeseen happened?

Mr. LABOUCHERE.—Yes, surely. The First Lord of the Treasury bases his claim to the days of private members on the fact that the unforeseen has happened—that the Land Purchase Bill is obstructed.

Mr. COURTNEY said that had not happened since the time referred to, and was not unforeseen. On all grounds it was impossible for the right hon. gentleman to depart now from the engagement he had made. The engagement of the right hon. gentleman was known to every member of the House; it was known to the hon. member for Northampton. Before sitting down he would like to say that his right hon. friend was a little obscure with respect to the Wednesdays subsequent to Whitsuntide. With regard to Bills which had been considered before Whitsuntide, which had passed a second reading, and which were set down for progress after Whitsuntide, if the opportunity of further progress was taken away they would put a stop to all legislation by private members and would make such legislation before Whitsuntide a farce. He entirely agreed with the right hon. gentleman as to the necessity of reserving those Wednesdays for such Bills. He protested against the contention of the hon. member for Northampton and the hon. member for Aberdeen that Wednesday, the 13th, should be taken.

The SPEAKER reminded the House that the amendment before it was a limited one.

Sir H. JAMES appealed to the member for Aberdeen to withdraw his amendment, and he would then ask leave to amend the motion so that it should read after the word "Bill," in the last line but one, "shall also have precedence on Wednesdays until said Bill has passed through Committee of the House."

Mr. BRYCE said that on that understanding he was willing to withdraw his amendment.

Sir H. JAMES said that if there were any ambiguity in the views of the hon. member for Aberdeen, there was no ambiguity in those of the right hon. gentleman the Chairman of Committees. Whatever might be the inconvenience to members of that House, and however desirable it might be that their time should be occupied by useful legislation, all that, according to the right hon. gentleman, ought to give way to what would be an abstract discussion on the right of female suffrage. The effect of the amendment which he begged leave to move was that until the Irish Land Bill passed through Committee all the Wednesdays should be taken up by that Bill. In that case they might hope that the Bill would be through Committee before the Whitsuntide recess, and if it were fewer Wednesdays would be taken by the Government after Whitsuntide. Anything which should interfere with the progress of that Bill through Committee would be detrimental to the public interest. What did the right hon. gentleman the Chairman of Committees ask? He asked that the Bill should be suspended, and that precedence should be given to the second reading of the Bill for conferring the suffrage upon women. Did the right hon. gentleman hope that there was any possibility of that Bill passing through the House? The House had still to deal with the Bill for marriage of a diseased wife's sister, with the Rating of Machinery Bill, with the Bill which would give a close time for hares. All those Bills had vested interests, and ought to be dealt with practically by the House. If they now said that they would not take away the Wednesday in question, but would give it for the pleasure of hearing the eloquence of his right hon. friend they must take more days after Whitsuntide, and all for an abstract proposition which they had already discussed eight or ten times in that House. There was only one argument which had been used in favour of that course—namely, that the right hon. gentleman had given a pledge. But this was a question for the House itself. They had to consider how they should best do what was useful for carrying on the public business. They should not be able to leave that House in the month of July if these days were not taken, and the Session would have to be further prolonged. The right hon. gentleman the leader of the House did not anticipate when he gave what had been called a pledge that eleven days would have been taken up with three clauses of the Irish Land Bill. He begged to move the amendment.

Viscount WOLMER said that the First Lord of the Treasury stated that he did not intend to move the adjournment of the House before the 13th of May, and that he would not take that day for the business of the Government unless some "wholly unforeseen emergency" had arisen. He would like to ask if any wholly unforeseen emergency had since arisen.

Sir W. HARCOURT said he did not know what the leader of the House would do. The right hon. gentleman was asking the House to make a sacrifice of its time for the purpose of carrying the Irish Land Bill through Committee. With regard to the pledge which had been referred to, the right hon. gentleman said that he had not

given a pledge, and it was a curious thing that a man should be bound, not by what he acknowledged to be a pledge, but by what other people understood to be a pledge. He thought that the proposal of the right hon. member for Bury was one which they ought to accept. The arrangement that all Wednesdays should be taken need hardly be broken into for the grand field day of the right hon. member for Liskeard and the noble lord the member for the Petersfield Division, whom in other circumstances they would be even more pleased to hear on the subject of female suffrage than they would be to hear the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. COURTNEY.—Why?

Sir W. HARCOURT.—He is younger.

Mr. W. H. SMITH trusted that the House would not consider it necessary to prolong the debate. The question before them was a very narrow one. It was whether the understanding that had been come to with reference to May 13th should or should not be observed. For himself he felt bound not to depart from that understanding, but it was for the House to decide what course should be taken.

Mr. WOODALL thanked the First Lord of the Treasury for the loyalty with which he had adhered to the understanding with reference to May 13th. He suggested that, as there were now only two Wednesdays before Whitsuntide, it would be just and equitable to exclude them from the operation of the resolution.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said that, in answer to a question addressed to him by the right hon. member for Mid Lothian, he had expressed willingness to forego Wednesdays altogether, but since his doing so the Wednesdays had been pressed upon the Government, and those who were responsible for the conduct of public business could hardly refrain from accepting facilities of that kind when they were offered.

Mr. HALDANE complained that if May 13th were taken by the Government it would be unfair treatment, for he had abstained last Friday from moving his resolution on female suffrage on the understanding that the Bill dealing with the subject would come up for discussion on Wednesday, the 13th.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS protested against the proposal to take May 6th, for which day the Town Holdings Bill stood at present as the first order.

The House then divided on Sir H. James's amendment, when there voted—

For the amendment	218
Against	159
Majority	—59

There was much cheering when the Clerk placed the voting paper in Sir Henry James's hand and the figures were announced.

A consequential amendment to strike out the words at the end of the motion, "if it be appointed on that day," was accepted by Mr. W. H. Smith and agreed to.

THE DIVISION LIST.

Thursday, 30th April, 1891.

Numb. 162.—Business of the House (Proceedings on the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill.—Motion made, and Question proposed, “That, whenever the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill is appointed for Tuesday or Friday, the House do meet at Three o’clock, and that the proceedings on that Bill have precedence over all Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion; and that the said Bill have precedence on Wednesday if it be appointed for that day;”—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*.)—

Amendment proposed, in line 5, after the word “Wednesday,” to insert the words “until it shall have passed through Committee:”—(*Sir Henry James*.)—

Question put, “That those words be there inserted:”—The House divided; Ayes 218, Noes 159.

AYES.

Abraham, Wm. (Glamorgan).	Campbell, Sir Arch. (Renfrewsh.).
Abraham, William (Limerick).	Campbell, Sir Geo. (Kirkcaldy).
Asher, Alexander.	Campbell-Bannerman, Rt. Hn. H.
Austin, John.	Carew, James Laurence.
Bailey, Sir Joseph R.	Cavan, Earl of.
Baird, John George Alexander.	Colman, Jeremiah James.
Balfour, Rt. Hn. J. Blair (Clackm.).	Crawford, Donald.
Balfour, J. Spencer (Burnley).	Cremer, William Randal.
Ballantine, Wm. Henry Walter.	Crilly, Daniel.
Barclay, James William.	Davenport, W. Bromley.
Baring, Viscount.	Davey, Sir Horace.
Barnes, Alfred.	Dawnay, Col. Hon. L. P.
Barran, John.	Deasy, John.
Baumann, Arthur Antony.	De Lisle, Edwin.
Beckett, Ernest William.	Dickson, Thomas A. (Dublin).
Bickford-Smith, William.	Dillwyn, Lewis Llewelyn.
Bigwood, James.	Donkin, Richard Sim.
Blane, Alexander.	Duff, Robert William.
Blundell, Col. Hen. Blundell H.	Duncan, James Archibald.
Bolitho, Thomas Bedford.	Elcho, Lord.
Bolton, Jos. Cheney (Stirlingsh.).	Elliot, Hn. Art. R. D. (Roxburghs.).
Bowles, Capt. Henry Ferryman.	Elliot, Geo. Wm. (Yorks. N.R.).
Bright, John A. (Birmingham).	Esslemont, Peter.
Bristowe, Thomas Lynn.	Evans, Francis H. (Southampton).
Brown, Alex. H. (Salop).	Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan).
Bruce, Gainsford (Finsbury).	Evershed, Sydney.
Brunner, John Tomlinson.	Ewing, Sir Archibald Orr.
Bryce, James.	Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith).
Burdett-Coutts, W.	Finch, George H.
Burghley, Lord.	Fisher, William Hayes.
Buxton, Sydney Charles.	Fitzgerald, J. Gubbins (Longford).
Caldwell, J.	Fitzwilliam, Hon. W. H. W.

Fletcher, Sir Henry.	Lloyd-George, David.
Flynn, James Christopher.	Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine.
Foljambe, Cecil G. S.	Long, Walter Hume.
Fowler, Rt. Hn. H. H. (Wolverh'n).	Lyell, Leonard.
Fry, Theodore (Darlington).	Macartney, W. G. Ellison.
Fulton, James Forrest.	MacInnes, Miles.
Furness, Christopher.	Maclean, James Mackenzie.
Gardner, Herbert.	M'Calmont, Capt. James.
Gathorne-Hardy, Hn. J. S. (Kent).	M'Cartan, Michael.
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E.	M'Carthy, Justin (Londonderry).
Gladstone, Herbert J. (Leeds).	M'Ewan, William.
Goldsmid, Sir Julian.	Maguire, James Rochfort.
Gower, Geo. Granville Leveson.	Mahony, Pierce.
Hall, Sir Charles (Cambridgesh.).	Malcolm, Col. John Wingfield.
Halsey, Thomas Frederick.	Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe.
Hanbury, Robert William.	Marjoribanks, Rt. Hon. Edward.
Hanbury-Tracy, Hon. F. S. A.	Maskelyne, M. H. Story.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir William.	Mildmay, Francis Bingham.
Hardcastle, Edward (Salford).	Milvain, Thomas.
Hardcastle, Frank (Lanc. S.E.).	More, Robert Jasper.
Havelock-Allan, Sir Henry M.	Morgan, Rt. Hn. G. O. (Denbighs.).
Heath, Arthur Raymond.	Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen).
Heneage, Rt. Hon. Edward.	Morgan, W. Pritchard (Merthyr).
Hinckes, Harry Tichborne.	Morley, Arnold (Nottingham).
Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead).	Morley, Rt. Hon. J. (Newcastle).
Howard, Joseph.	Morrison, Walter.
Howell, George.	Morton, Alpheus Cleophas.
Hunter, Wm. Alex. (Aberdeen).	Mowbray, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Oxford U.).
Illingworth, Alfred.	Mowbray, R. G. C. (Lanc. S.E.).
Isaacs, Lewis Henry.	Muncaster, Lord.
Jarvis, Alexander Weston.	Neville, Ralph.
Joicey, James.	Newark, Viscount.
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.	O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary).
Keay, John Seymour.	O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal).
Kennaway, Sir John Henry.	O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool).
Kimber, Henry.	Oldroyd, Mark.
King, Henry Seymour (Hull).	O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, E. (Roch.).	Paget, Sir Richard Horner.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. (Kent).	Palmer, Sir Charles Mark.
Knox, Edmund Francis Vesey.	Parker, Hon. Francis (Oxfordsh.).
Labouchere, Henry.	Paulton, James Mellor.
Lafone, Alfred.	Pease, Alfred E. (York).
Lane, William John.	Pease, Henry Fell (Yorks. N.R.).
Laurie, Col. Robert Peter.	Picton, James Allanson.
Lawrence, Sir Trevor (Surrey).	Playfair, Rt. Hon. Sir Lyon.
Lawrence, W. F. (Liverpool).	Powell, Francis Sharp.
Lea, Thomas (Londonderry).	Priestley, Briggs.
Lees, Elliott.	Reed, Sir Edw. James (Cardiff).
Lefevre, Rt. Hon. George Shaw.	Reid, Robt. Threshie (Dumfries).
Leighton, Stanley.	Rendel, Stuart.
Leng, John.	Ridley, Sir Matthew White.
Lewis, Thomas P. (Anglesey).	Roberts, John (Flint Burghs).

Robertson, Edmund (Dundee).
 Robinson, Thomas (Gloucester).
 Roe, Thomas.
 Rothschild, Baron F. James de.
 Rowlands, James (Finsbury).
 Russell, Sir George (Berkshire).
 Samuelson, Sir B. (Oxford, N.).
 Sexton, Thomas.
 Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew).
 Sheehan, Jeremiah Daniel.
 Sidebottom, T. Harrop (Stalybr.).
 Sidebottom, William (Derbysh.).
 Sinclair, William Pirrie.
 Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.).
 Spencer, Hn. C. R. (Northampton).
 Stack, John.
 Stewart, Halley (Lincolnshire).
 Stokes, Sir George Gabriel.
 Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath).
 Sullivan, T. D. (Dublin).
 Sutherland, A. (Sutherlandsh.).
 Tanner, Charles Kearns.
 Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr).
 Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray.
 Trevelyan, Rt. Hn. Sir Geo. Otto.

Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Henry James and Colonel Saunderson.

NOES.

Ainslie, William George.
 Allison, Robert Andrew.
 Allsopp, Hon. Geo. (Worcester).
 Allsopp, Hon. Percy (Taunton).
 Anstruther, H. T. (St. Andrews).
 Anstruther, Col. Lloyd (Suffolk).
 Ashmead-Bartlett, Ellis.
 Baden-Powell, Sir Geo. Smyth.
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manc'r).
 Balfour, Gerald William (Leeds).
 Bartley, George C. T.
 Bazley-White, J.
 Beach, W. W. Bramston (Hants.).
 Beaufoy, Mark Hanbury.
 Bentinck, Lord H. C. (Norfolk).
 Bethell, Commander.
 Biddulph, Michael.
 Birkbeck, Sir Edward.
 Birrell, Augustine.
 Boord, Thomas William.
 Bridgeman, Col. Hon. Francis C.
 Brodrick, Hon. St. John.
 Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn.

Tuite, James.
 Vivian, Sir Henry Hussey.
 Wallace, Robert.
 Waring, Col. Thomas.
 Watson, James.
 Watt, Hugh.
 Wayman, Thomas.
 Webb, Alfred.
 Webster, R. G. (St. Pancras).
 Wharton, John Lloyd.
 Whitley, Edward.
 Whitmore, Charles Algernon.
 Wiggin, Henry.
 Will, John Shiress.
 Williams, Joseph Powell (Birm.).
 Williamson, J. (Lanc. N.).
 Williamson, Steph. (Kilm'nock).
 Wilson, Charles Henry (Hull).
 Wilson, John (Lanark).
 Wilson, Sir Samuel (Portsmouth).
 Winterbotham, Arthur Brend.
 Wodehouse, Edmond Robert.
 Wroughton, Philip.
 Yerburch, Robert Armstrong.
 Young, Charles Edward Baring.

Ellis, Sir J. Whittaker (Surrey).
 Farquharson, Dr. R. (Aberd'sh.).
 Feilden, Lieut.-Gen. (Lanc. N.).
 Fellowes, Ailwyn Edward.
 Fenwick, Charles.
 Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc'r).
 Forwood, Arthur Bower.
 Fowler, Sir Robert N. (London).
 Fraser, Gen. Charles Craufurd.
 Gedge, Sydney.
 Giles, Alfred.
 Godson, Augustus Frederick.
 Goldsworthy, Major-General.
 Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon.
 Goschen, Rt. Hon. Geo. Joachim.
 Grimston, Viscount.
 Grove, Sir Thomas Fraser.
 Gunter, Colonel.
 Gurdon, Robert Thornhagh.
 Haldane, Richard Burdon.
 Hamilton, Col. Chas. E. (South'k).
 Harland, Sir Edward James.
 Heathcote, Captain Edwards.
 Herbert, Hon. Sidney.
 Hill, Rt. Hn. Lord Arthur (Down).
 Hill, Col. Edwd. Stock (Bristol).
 Hoare, Samuel (Norwich).
 Holloway, George.
 Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry.
 Howorth, Henry Hoyle.
 Hozier, James Henry Cecil.
 Hughes, Colonel Edwin.
 Hunt, Frederick Seager.
 Hunter, Sir Guyer (Hackney).
 Isaacson, Frederick Wootton.
 Jackson, Rt. Hon. Wm. Lawies.
 Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick.
 Johnston, William.
 Kenyon, Hon. George Thomas.
 Knightley, Sir Rainald.
 Leahy, James (Kildare).
 Lechmere, Sir Edmund A. H.
 Legh, Thos. Wodehouse (Lanc.).
 Lennox, Lord Walter C. Gordon.
 Lewisham, Viscount.
 Llewellyn, Evan Henry.
 Lockwood, Frank.
 Low, Malcolm.
 Lowther, Hn. Wm. (Westm'land).
 Lymington, Viscount.
 Mackintosh, Charles Frazer.
 Maclure, John William.

M'Donald, Dr. Roderick.
 M'Lagan, Peter.
 M'Laren, Walter S. B.
 Madden, Dodgson Hamilton.
 Marriott, Rt. Hon. Sir W. T.
 Matthews, Rt. Hon. Henry.
 Maxwell, Sir Herbert E.
 Montagu, Samuel.
 Morgan (Octavius V. Battersea).
 Morrell, George Herbert.
 Mount, William George.
 Mulholland, Henry Lyle.
 Murdoch, Charles Townshend.
 Nolan, Colonel (Galway, N.).
 Norris, Edward Samuel.
 Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford.
 Norton, Robert.
 Pearson, Sir Charles John.
 Pelly, Sir Lewis.
 Philipps, John Wynford.
 Pickersgill, Edward Hare.
 Plowden, Sir William Chichele.
 Plunket, Rt. Hon. David R.
 Pomfret, William Pomfret.
 Price, Captain (Devonport).
 Rankin, James.
 Reed, Henry Byron (Bradford).
 Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson.
 Robertson, Rt. Hon. J. P. B. (Bute).
 Robinson, Brooke (Dudley).
 Round, James.
 Rountree, Joshua.
 Russell, T. W. (Tyrone).
 Selwyn, Capt. Charles William.
 Smith, Abel (Herts).
 Smith, Rt. Hn. Wm. H. (Strand).
 Stanhope, Rt. Hn. E. (Lincolnsh.).
 Summers, William.
 Sykes, Christopher.
 Talbot, John Gilbert.
 Taylor, Francis.
 Temple, Sir Richard.
 Theobald, James.
 Thorburn, Walter.
 Tyler, Sir Henry Whatley.
 Vernon, Hon. Greville Richard.
 Vincent, Chas. Edw. Howard.
 Walsh, Hn. Arthur Henry John.
 Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight).
 West, W. Cornwallis.
 Weston, Sir Joseph Dodge.
 Weymouth, Viscount.

Williams Arthur (Glamorgan).	Woodall, William.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.).	Wortley, Charles Beilby Stuart.
Winn, Hon. Rowland.	Wright, Caleb (Lanc. S. W.)
Wolmer, Viscount.	Wright, H. Smith (Nottingham).
Wood, Nicholas.	

Tellers for the Noes, Mr. Akers-Douglas and Sir William Walrond.

CONVERSAZIONE.

In view of the expected debate on May 13th, a conversazione was arranged to take place in the galleries of the Royal Institution of Painters in Water Colours, Piccadilly, on the evening of Monday, 11th. Invitations were issued to supporters of Mr. Woodall's Bill, in the names of the following ladies, who kindly consented to form a Reception Committee:—The Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, Miss Courtenay, Mrs. Fawcett, Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Miss Davenport-Hill, Lady Lethbridge, Lady Matheson, Mrs. Penrose Fitzgerald, the Countess of Portsmouth, Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Westlake, the Lady Maude Wolmer. Amongst the earliest arrivals were, the Lady Frances Balfour, Dr. Storey (of Roseneath), Louisa Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Davies, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Mr. Anderson, the Misses Anderson, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, Miss Courtney, Lord and Lady George Campbell, Lady Matheson, Major and Mrs. Houston, Mr. and Mrs. Hallett, Rev. Donald Fraser, Miss Garrett, Miss Gurney, Mr. McLaren, M.P., Mr. Woodall, M.P., Mr. and Mrs. Moberley Bell, Mrs. Sheldon Amos, Mr. and Miss Amos, Miss Dorothea Roberts, Mrs. Shaen, Mrs. Rowland Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Stopes, Colonel Wintle, Mrs. Miller Morrison, Mr. B. Blackburn, Mrs. Rowe Bennett, Miss Catherine Drew, Mr. Atkins, Mrs. H. W. Lawrence, and Mrs. Coffey, Mrs. Bateson, Mrs. Bathurst, Mrs. and Miss Henn Collins, Mrs. Culme Seymour, Captain James, Mr. Clutton, Miss Edith Phillott, Miss McKerlie, Miss A. E. Bell, Miss Gertrude Andrews, Mr. Tod, Misses Hill, Mrs. Earnshaw, Miss Ellaby, M.D., Miss Spring Rice, Misses Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. Shore Smith, Miss Hubbard, Mrs. Wynford Philipps, Miss Cicely Philipps, Miss L. M. Wilkinson, Miss F. R. Wilkinson, Miss Greenhill, Lady Weston, Miss Zimmerman, Mr. and the Lady Ida Lowe, Mrs. Gerald Wellesley, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Watt, Miss Vernon, Mrs. and Miss Sterling, Mr. Stone and Miss Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Stanger, Mrs. S. W. Rea, Miss Eccles, Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Pease, Major and Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. W. Debenham, Miss M. H. Hart, Mrs. Kyllmann, Misses Vernon Harcourt, Miss Robson, Mrs. Alexander Ross, Mrs. Mylne, Miss Walker, M.D., Mr. and Miss Dryhurst, Mr. F. E. Garrett, &c., &c.

Letters regretting unavoidable absence were received from the Countess of Portsmouth, Mrs. Temple, Mr. Rankin, M.P., Sir Albert Rollit, M.P., &c. Lady Maude Wolmer was prevented by

illness from being present, also Miss Tod, Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., Misses Davenport-Hill, and several others.

The Committee had, in the first instance, contemplated a gathering mainly social in character, but after the change wrought in the political position by the division on Sir Henry James' amendment on April 30th, it was determined to introduce a more political element, and speeches were accordingly arranged to be given between ten and eleven o'clock in the Eastern Gallery, by Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., the Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Rev. Donald Fraser, D.D., Mr. McLaren, M.P., and Mr. Woodall, M.P.

Mr. McLAREN was voted to the chair, and after reviewing the circumstances by which the Bill had been set aside, he went on to say it was of course open to the House of Commons to discuss, or decline to discuss, any measure that might come before it, but no measure had been treated with such injustice as this one—despite all the efforts their friends could put forth. Two years before, when a debate was expected, they had been cheated out of their day by a conspiracy between the Radicals, Mr. Labouchere being chief intriguer, and the Conservatives' Whips. This year it had not been possible for the intriguers to enter into negotiations with the Government, because Mr. W. H. Smith had given an assurance to the deputation of ladies who had waited on him, that the day for second reading should not be absorbed. They had been obliged, therefore, to adopt more open proceedings, and attention had thus been drawn to the manner in which the Women's Suffrage party had been cheated.

Many members though in favour of the measure, had not the courage to oppose its being set aside. They tried to get all they could from women and would give nothing in return. If women would take a bold stand, and make it clear to candidates and members that they would not receive their help unless they pledged themselves to support Women's Suffrage they would, in a year or two, have the fulfilment of their hopes. But so long as it was treated only in an academic way, they would be cheated in the future as they had been in the past. He trusted that all women interested in this subject would do their best so to organise in the constituencies as to press this matter forward at every election.

The LADY FRANCES BALFOUR being then called upon to speak, said she did not know why she should be asked to speak first, unless it were because she was the youngest of the recruits. In a lively manner she described the fears that were felt when it was known that the Government intended to take private members days, how Mr. W. H. Smith stated that he had given something in the nature of a pledge that the 13th should not be taken, and now after all the day for the Suffrage Bill was lost. When they considered the position the question occupied now and compared it with that it occupied fifteen years ago, they had no cause for anything but cheerfulness. They had only to go straight forward, for they had come to be regarded seriously: they had only to go on trying to strengthen members of Parliament, and in a short time they would gain all they wanted.

Mr. WOODALL, M.P., after some preliminary comments on the

fate of the Bill, went on to say that now they must dismiss all illusions. They had been accustomed to think of Women's Suffrage as having been voted for on its own merits. They had seen women taking their part so well in Municipal elections, School Board and Poor Law Guardian work, that if by a stroke of the pen their work and influence could be eliminated it would be to annul a great power from among the motive forces which are now being brought to bear on the administrative work of the day and on social problems. They had taken it for granted that the battle was over when they might count on a majority in the present Parliament. Thus a fallacious opinion had grown up that the academic feeling in favour of their claim was strong enough to assure them a vote of the majority of the House. It was only of recent years that all political parties had come to acknowledge the importance of the co-operation of women, yet all had misgivings, lest they should spoil their calculations by the introduction of this new element. They needed to impress members with the conviction that women are in earnest; that they desire the vote for the uses they can put it to. They must make earnest effort. He believed there was a general feeling even amongst opponents that their ultimate triumph was certain.

Mrs. GARRETT ANDERSON, who was very cordially received, said she wished to express how very important she thought the present crisis to be. They must throw their hearts into this work if they meant to bring it to a successful issue. People were not yet sufficiently convinced that women do care for this thing. A great deal of activity ought to be their's before the next general election, and she would be glad to see a large sum raised, for propagandism is expensive. When they heard a person like Mr. Labouchere say that the suffrage is no more likely to be given to women than to rabbits, that ought to be brought up against him on every occasion. It was a scandal for a man who called himself a man to say such a thing.

Mrs. ASHWORTH HALLETT said that it was in 1870 that the Women's Suffrage Bill was first introduced into Parliament, and there were some present that evening who had never ceased to work for the question during that long period of years. In the early days of the movement they had endured the scoff and sneers of opponents with becoming meekness. They were supported by the belief that they had got hold of a truth which, in the progress of events, would have to be acknowledged. They had seen political power gradually extended to thousands of "capable" illiterate men. Statesmen had now to reckon with a vast unwieldy electorate swayed by emotion and sentiment, and in their difficulties they were entreating women to lend their aid to lead and guide this incalculable host. Women having no voice in forming the laws were asked to help to form the ideas of the new law makers. No longer were politics outside women's sphere. If women, to quote Mr. Gladstone, have "a real part to play in Party politics," then it was clear that the bottom had been knocked out of all the arguments, ancient and modern, against giving them responsible political power. The women who are asking for the franchise are the only voters representing property who are left outside the

Constitution. They are already included in the local electoral roll, and when added to the Parliamentary register they would bring some balance of intelligence to set against the ignorance that abounded. She believed that the votes of women would be on the side of strong Government, on the side of law and order, of religion and morality. They asked for the franchise for women because they believed it would add a new power and virtue to the State, and that in the future, as in the past, every act which helped to raise the status of women would add to the well-being of the world.

The Rev. DONALD FRASER was next asked to address the audience, and began by saying that this was his maiden speech on the subject, though he had been a convinced adherent for over twenty years. His profession had taken him from political discussions, yet in his quiet room he had often felt indignant that a question of such importance should be balked year by year by provoking delays, nor did he think it creditable to men that it had to be pressed so much. He had no fear that its supporters would lose heart or hope, for as it has been said, "our desires are increased by our difficulties."

It is the voice of the dunce that says "women do not understand public affairs," the dunce is afraid of the woman who has enlarged her mind by these questions. The real objection is that men think women very dangerous persons. They are so easily humbugged, men say, and so fond of hobbies. But that is about the most incorrect fallacy they can utter. Women are not so sentimental as men, for they are much more practical, and in so far as they have been intrusted with the public affairs of the country it is not they who have set up fads and hobbies. This question was not one that should be only pushed by women; men should push it also. Women, when they have the power of the vote, would see through a good many men who are cajoling the masses. They would put their bodkins into a good many windbags. It would not be possible to subtract from the number of voters, but it would be possible to make a wise and reasonable addition, one that would bring intelligence and a new point of view into the whole sphere of politics, and would help the moral amelioration of the people.

Mrs. FAWCETT then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and the company, which had collected during the speeches in the Eastern Gallery, dispersed through the various rooms, taking leave towards midnight.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Times.

"The Woman's Franchise Bill belongs to a class of measures which are a scandal to representative institutions—measures which, by the insistence of a noisy and importunate minority acting upon the cowardice and flabbiness of candidates for seats in the House of Commons, gradually secure the perfunctory support of numbers who

are thoroughly opposed to them, and sometimes become law in defiance of the true opinion of the House and the country. Men in quest of seats are addicted to the immoral practice of promising their support to measures which they know to be bad, and of soothing their conscience with the argument that the measures are too bad ever to pass. There is no measure too bad or too ridiculous to be passed by an Assembly in which this form of dishonesty is prevalent. A moment arrives when the number of those who are bound by these dissolute pledges becomes so great that the obstacle in which they put their trust, even while doing all that lay in their own power to overthrow it, is finally swept away. This is bad enough even in matters of minor importance. But in this country we have no written Constitution and no organic statutes of any kind. Nothing is safe from a chance vote of the House of Commons, and, unless that House is inspired by a high sense of public duty, the tactics we have described may be as easily used to effect the most profound as the most superficial changes. The admission of women to equal political power with men is a wild experiment from which the most advanced democracies in all ages have shrunk. Yet to that experiment we are so nearly committed, in the teeth of reason, experience, and the sober conviction of an overwhelming majority, that the House of Commons is glad to snatch at the somewhat ignominious expedient of preventing the question from being put to the vote."

Globe.

"Women's Franchise is not a burning question, but it is of very much more importance, in respect both of justice and of expediency, than many which emulate temporary volcanoes; and to treat it as an intrusion upon the serious business of the country is to virtually admit ignorance of its whole character and bearing. Moreover, a considerable number of pledges have been given that it shall be fairly considered; and we do not take for granted that election pledges are made only to be broken, or else given under the tacit condition that the measure in respect of which they are given shall have no chance of becoming law. Mr. W. H. Smith only gave evidence of his care for the reputation of the House, as well as of his right estimate of a great question when he insisted upon giving advocates of women's suffrage their single opportunity during the present session. For once, the temper of the House of Commons appears to be sufficiently cool and unpreoccupied to consider it on its merits; and—though such appearances are deceptive—it is regrettable that the opportunity should have been refused."

Pall Mall Gazette.

"The great movement which is teaching women to think, and enabling them to act, for themselves, which is encouraging them to possess character and individuality, and to put those qualities into careers, will but receive a slender tributary when a Woman's Suffrage Bill is read for the third time and has sustained but little check from yesterday's jockeying.

"Meanwhile, there is one practical good which should arise from

yesterday's double shuffle. It ought to teach the Liberal lady politicians that they are being humbugged; that from the Liberal Party, as a party, they, as women, have nothing to look for."

Western Morning News.

"Women already vote for Municipal Councils, for Boards of Guardians, and for School Boards. Nobody has suggested that they have unsexed themselves. But when it is proposed that the Parliamentary privilege shall be extended to them, then the bulk of the Liberal Party will not so much as discuss the matter. So much the worse for the Liberal Party. If the Conservatives are to have on their side all that is most intelligent and aspiring amongst educated English women, we may depend upon it that the Conservative Party will soon be moved by yet stronger and stronger desires for social improvement, and that in the end it will become popular by good deeds which can never be extinguished. Services like those performed by the main body of the Conservatives last night towards women will be paid, not so much by women's support, as by women's influence. We wish we could claim more Liberal Unionists, but we have some of the best of them."

Punch.

"Thursday.—A pretty little game on to-night. OLD MORALITY moved his Resolution taking power to appropriate Tuesdays and Fridays evening sittings, and all Wednesdays for Irish Land Bill. In ordinary circumstances there would have been stormy protest led from Front Opposition Bench against this inroad on time of private Members. Other fish to fry to-night. Wednesday week assigned for Second Reading of Woman's Suffrage Bill; if Government take that day for Irish Land Bill, obviously can't be utilised for furtherance of Woman's Rights. This is an awkward question for some Members; don't like it, but daren't vote against it. Here's opportunity of getting rid of it by side-wind. Not necessary in arranging proceedings to mention Suffrage Bill, or even Wednesday, 13th of May. It was principle for which Members struggled; the 'principle of uniformity,' as Mr. G. beautifully put it. 'Let us,' he said, though perhaps not quite in this phrase, 'go the whole hog or none; take all the Wednesdays, or leave them.'

"Pretty to see OLD MORALITY protesting against this unprecedented access of generosity. The very picture, as MCEWAN said, of a good man struggling with the adversity of overwhelming good fortune. Was prepared to take a Wednesday here and there; but, really, too much to appropriate every one. 'Not at all—not at all,' said Mr. G. 'But it was only under compulsion of a Division that he consented to accept the endowment. In meanwhile, the Woman's Suffrage debate on Wednesday week snuffed out, and final opportunity of Session lost.

"'I'm inclined,' said WM. WOODALL, 'as a rule, to take kindly views of my fellow men, to put the best construction upon their actions; but, upon my word, I'm not satisfied in my own mind that

we advocates of Woman's Rights have not been made the victims of deep and dastardly design.'

"'Order! Order!' said COURTNEY; 'no more am I.'
 "Business done.—Woman's Rights men dished."

Truth.

"Had the House of Commons had an opportunity to vote upon the proposal, the ladies would have discovered that the Legislature is as likely to give them votes as to give votes to rabbits, for it would have been defeated by a very large majority."

Methodist Times.

"The way in which the House of Commons sneaked out of the necessity of recording its opinion for or against the Female Franchise Bill was not creditable to the male sex. If Members of Parliament do not believe in extending the vote to women, let them at least have the courage to say so, and then we shall know where we are. It is to be feared that some advocates of the Female Suffrage have imperilled their cause by making extreme demands. Not satisfied with giving votes to such women as are ratepayers, they wish to confer the vote upon every woman at once, which would effect at a stroke such a complete revolution in the distribution of political power that even the friends of the gradual recognition of Female Suffrage might hesitate to concede it. The frequently expressed argument that the vote should be resisted on the ground that all women are Conservatives is too contemptible for discussion. If women are entitled to the suffrage the way they are likely to vote has nothing to do with it. As to the argument that they are likely to be influenced by the parsons, it comes with ill grace from men who have been often influenced by the publicans, and of the two we prefer the parsons. We quite admit that the question is a grave one, but it ought to be discussed on its merits and not meanly dismissed by a side wind."

Speaker.

"Certain forms of female suffrage are already in force in this country, and practical politicians have had an opportunity of seeing for themselves how they answer. It is true that the extension of the franchise to women which has already taken place is in itself unobjectionable. But the equity of the change which gave certain women a vote in municipal affairs is independent of the manner in which they have used that vote. Unfortunately experience has taught all who are concerned in municipal elections that the working of the female franchise has not been satisfactory. Whether rightly or wrongly, the fact remains that the great majority of female voters have the strangest dislike for independence. There are, of course, striking exceptions to the rule; but these exceptions only seem to make the rule more conspicuous. The majority of the ladies who now enjoy a vote in municipal affairs vote as they are told. That is to say, they place themselves in the hands of some trusted friend, and their ballot-paper is marked as that friend advises. By-and-by this may all be changed; the idea of the independence of

woman, which now possesses so strongly the minds of a few, may permeate the whole mass of the female sex. But clearly that is not the case at present, and will hardly be the case for a generation to come. What happens now is that certain favoured persons—clergymen being conspicuous among their number—though they are not allowed a plurality of wives, are permitted to enjoy a plurality of votes; and in more cases than we care to dwell upon, the votes of women in municipal contests have been cast against useful and necessary measures of reform, merely for the sake of pleasing their spiritual or medical advisers."

NOTE.—The following letters furnish an appropriate commentary on the above passage.

The first is from Miss Sanders, Cardiff.

"My father (Mr. Alderman Sanders, of Cardiff) wishes me to say that he thinks few men have a wider or more continued experience of municipal contests than he has had, which experience extends over more than thirty years. It may be perfectly true that some women vote as they are told, but not the majority. It is equally true that many men vote as they are told, but on the whole he is convinced that the majority of women voters use their suffrage with a higher and nobler purpose than do the majority of the other sex."

The next letter is from Mr. S. Hayward, Bath, who writes:—"An experience of thirty years in municipal elections in Bath (where the women voters comprise 1,700 out of 7,000) enables me confidently to contradict the assertion of the writer in the *Speaker*, 'that the great majority of female voters have the strongest dislike for independence.' The municipal elections here have generally been fought on political grounds (I think unfortunately), and hence both male and female voters have been influenced in various ways; but I have found that the women voters have generally attached more importance than the men to the personal moral character and social usefulness of a candidate; and certainly have shown more independence than the majority of the lower class of male voters."

FUTURE EFFORTS.

The Executive Committee have received many suggestions as to the best methods of concentrating the strength of the movement which has for quarter of a century been steadily increasing in force.

The effort to obtain a fair hearing for the question has now received the aid of the Government. This combined with the approach of a General Election makes the present a time peculiarly calling for energetic action.

In regard to the necessary sinews of war, the Com-

mittee have received the following letter from a lady, whose name if she would permit its publication, would carry weight. They commend it to the attention of their supporters :—

“I advise raising a good sum to spend in working up the country during the next three years. I will contribute £100 a year for three years on condition that £900 a year more is promised.

“I think £1,000 a year is not in the least too much to spend just now.

“Would it be worth while to have a Self-denial Suffrage Week, say in November or December, of each year, in which friends all over the country shall deny themselves all luxuries and put the proceeds into our fund? . . . We must find ways of making it recognised that we care **VERY MUCH** on the subject.”

The aid of women is constantly invoked in election contests, and it is surely reasonable to ask those who desire such help to take part in obtaining for women the right to exercise quietly by their votes the political power which they are urged by all parties in turn to exert in their favour by canvassing or other more conspicuous methods.

Women are called on now more imperatively than they have ever been called on before to make their views known to the men who are likely to have the power of carrying them out, and by this means lend the most effective form of co-operation to the efforts of their friends in the House of Commons as well as to the efforts of the Committee, who will do their utmost to secure the introduction of a Bill next session.

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NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OCCASIONAL PAPER,

*Issued by the Central Committee, 10, Great College Street,
Westminster.*

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25th March, 1892.

London:
PRINTED BY VACHER & SONS, WESTMINSTER.

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OCCASIONAL PAPER,

25th March, 1892.

CURRENT NOTES.

WITH the introduction of a new Bill (the text of which has just been printed), the Executive Committee desire to place a brief statement of the present position and prospects of the Women's Suffrage question before their members and friends.

THE announcement appeared early in January, that Sir Algernon Borthwick, Bart., M.P., had consented to bring in a Bill this Session for the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women. The effect of the Bill would be to enfranchise those women who already vote in County Council, School Board, Town Council, and Board of Guardians elections.

This announcement caused a great increase of hope that some definite step might be achieved in the Session of 1892.

ON the first day of the Session the Parliamentary Committee, consisting of Members of Parliament supporters of Women's Suffrage, held a meeting in one of the Committee rooms of the House of Commons, to consider the best steps for promoting the Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women. The Members present were:—Mr. Woodall (in the chair), Sir Algernon Borthwick, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Lewis

Fry, Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, Mr. Haldane, Mr. W. Johnston, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. Byron Reed, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Ernest Spencer, Mr. A. Williams, Viscount Wolmer.

It was resolved to support Sir Algernon Borthwick in introducing his Bill, and agreed that a number of Members should ballot for a day for the second reading.

IN the subsequent ballot, the best place was drawn by Sir Albert Rollit, who stood eleventh on the list. Sir Albert Rollit has secured Wednesday, April 27th, for the second reading of the Bill, which stands first on the orders of the day, and is backed by Sir Algernon Borthwick, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Walter M'Laren, Mr. Penrose FitzGerald, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Ernest Spencer.

Mr. WALTER M'LAREN obtained the next place, and has also set down a Bill for second reading on May 18th, which is backed by Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Sir Edward Watkin, Baron Dimsdale, Dr. Cameron, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Lewis Fry, Mr. Webb, Mr. Byron Reed, and Mr. Maclure.

THERE are thus two Bills before the House; one introduced by a Conservative, the other by a Liberal, and each backed by Members of all parties. The text of Sir Albert Rollit's Bill will be found below.

AT a Special Meeting of the Executive Committee, held at 10, Great College Street, Westminster, on

February 11th, it was resolved:—"That this Committee rejoices to hear that a favourable day has been secured for the second reading of the Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women. They will do their utmost to further the Bill introduced under the auspices of Sir Albert Rollit and Sir Algernon Borthwick, and they cordially thank all those Members who took part in the ballot."

THE effect of the Bill thus brought forward by Sir Albert Rollit will be to place on the Parliamentary register all those women who now vote in the various local elections. It will thus enfranchise those women who are already accustomed to voting, and whose numbers can be accurately ascertained.

THE Committee desire to remind their members and friends that the most valuable help that can be rendered to the movement between the present time and the date for the second reading, is to bring the question before the consideration of Members, either by means of letters or petitions, or by questions at meetings, or in conversation. They also would urge the value of keeping the subject before the attention of candidates, especially those candidates who seek for the help of women in canvassing and other political work preparatory to the General Election, yet would ignore their claim to the instrument by which the most effective political aid can be given, the quiet and silent instrument of the vote.

TEXT OF THE WOMEN'S FRANCHISE BILL.

[55 VICT.] *Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women).*

A
BILL

TO

A.D. 1892. Extend the Parliamentary Franchise to Women.

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Short
title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Act, 1892.

Extension
of parlia-
mentary
franchise.

2. Every woman who—

(1) In Great Britain is registered or entitled to be registered as an elector for any town council or county council; or

(2) In Ireland is a ratepayer entitled to vote at an election for guardians of the poor;

shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector, and when registered to vote at any parliamentary election for the county, borough, or division wherein the qualifying property is situate.

(Prepared and brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Sir A. Borthwick, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. W. M'Laren, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Burt and Mr. Ernest Spencer.)

Notice of opposition, that the Bill be read this day six months, has been given by Mr. Samuel Smith, by Mr. John Kelly, and by Mr. Radcliffe Cooke.

STATISTICS OF WOMEN VOTERS.

The following table shews the number of women on the registers for the election of Town and County Councillors:—

	Town.	County.
England)	243,448	412,340
Wales)		
Scotland . . .	54,678	61,445
Total	298,126	503,199

The above voters consist of occupiers in either borough or county divisions, who are entered on the rate books as having paid their rates, and who have occupied a house, shop, warehouse or other tenement in the parish for twelve months previous to July 15th, 1891.

Note.—Occupiers of flats and joint occupiers are included in the above, also occupiers of part of a house, when occupied separately for carrying on any trade, profession or business.

For instance, a house might be occupied by a shopkeeper on the ground floor, a milliner on the first floor, and a photographer on the upper floors, each carrying on a quite separate business, and if the landlord were not resident on the premises each could be registered as a voter.

Owners or tenants of land of a clear yearly value of £10. Joint owners can vote when the value is sufficient, if divided, to give £10 to each. For instance, three sisters owning land or houses of the rental of £30 can each be registered as a voter.

There are no returns available by which to calculate the number of women ratepayers in Ireland. It is however probable that it would be somewhat less than in Scotland.

RECENT MEETINGS.

Several meetings have taken place since the opening of Parliament, the most important being those held in Birmingham, in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, and in Bristol.

BIRMINGHAM.

A meeting was held in the Masonic Hall, New Street, on

February 23rd, under the auspices of the Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage, in support of the Women's Suffrage Bill now before Parliament. Mrs. Ashford presided; and among those present were Lady Sawyer, Lady Foster, Mrs. R. W. Dale, Mrs. A. C. Osler, Mrs. J. K. Reid, Mrs. Arthur Dixon, Mrs. W. H. Ryland, Mrs. Sonnenschein, Mrs. Barrow, Mrs. C. E. Mathews, Mrs. Fellowes, Mrs. Farrow, Mrs. Fred. Impey, Mrs. E. L. Tyndall, Mrs. G. C. Elkington, Mrs. C. D. Sturge, Mrs. C. Dixon, &c. Apologies for absence were announced from the Marchioness of Hertford, the Dowager Countess of Aylesford, the Countess of Aylesford, Lady Knightley, Mrs. C. Mallet, Mrs. H. G. Reid, Mrs. H. Chamberlain, Dr. and Mrs. Crosskey, &c. The President, at the commencement of the proceedings, proposed a vote of condolence with the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Queen, and the Royal Family in the loss they had sustained by the death of the Duke of Clarence. Lady Foster seconded the resolution which was carried in silence.—The President said that every lady present had been invited to attend that meeting, because it was known that she took an interest in the social problems of the day. A large majority of them, no doubt, had worked in some of the various elections in the city and neighbourhood, sometimes side by side, and sometimes on opposite sides. At the conclusion of her speech she proposed, "That this meeting heartily approves and supports the Women's Suffrage Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Sir A. Rollit, for the second reading of which he has secured the first place on April 27th, and calls upon those present to unite in urging on their various political associations the desirability of supporting this measure of justice to women." Mrs. C. E. Mathews seconded the resolution, which was supported by Mrs. Sheldon Amos and Mrs. Fawcett, who remarked that it was very natural that those who had been called upon in some measure to take up active political work should feel keenly the absurdity of their present position, and they also felt keenly the absurdity of the position of the men who asked them to do various kinds of hard and rough work connected with the conduct of an election, yet said in effect were not fit to quietly enter a polling booth and vote. All sides invited them to work for them, speak for them, do hard rough work for them, and help to find the money to conduct the political fights, but neither party as a party had yet thought fit to take up the question of the enfranchisement of women. The result was that platform-women had their full share, perhaps, of political power; but the quiet and typical domestic women, to whom an appearance on the platform was distasteful, and who felt that they could not take up active political life, were entirely excluded from any influence in political affairs. Lady Sawyer and Mrs. A. Osler supported the resolution, which was carried.

LONDON.

A large meeting in support of the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women was held in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, on February 26th, under the auspices of the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, 29, Parliament Street. A full report of this meeting appeared in the *Women's Herald*. The following is the speech of the Right Hon. Leonard Courtney, M.P., who presided.

Mr. Courtney said the friends of Women's Suffrage stood that day in a position upon which they might congratulate themselves (cheers). They had a good position from the Parliamentary point of view. They had been for several sessions now somewhat unlucky. The wisdom of Parliament was not always shown in its own procedure, and it was certainly a remarkable fact that the question what subjects it should take up and discuss, and what persons it should hear, should, for half of its sittings—those specially which are given over for the benefit of private members—be determined by pure chance. Luck and not selection rule the House. There might be some subject that a very large section, even a majority of the House of Commons, would wish to discuss; but if the persons who have put their names in the lucky box for the discussion of that question, do not get their names drawn in the first select few, all chance of discussion is gone. But now the wheel of fortune seemed to have turned, and two good places had been secured by two good friends of the cause, Mr. Walter McLaren (cheers) whom we saw there that night, and Sir Albert Rollit (cheers) whom he had the pleasure of seeing in the House of Commons just before he left, and who charged him to convey his regret that he was not able to come here. He did not think the malice of enemies could well take away both those days, and he thought the difficulty of taking away both would probably prevent all intrigues to take away either. It was, no doubt, true, that in one sense the Parliamentary future is doubtful. The lives of its members were numbered. The "blind Fury with the abhorred shears" might at any moment intervene and cut through the thin span of life. But even, he ventured to believe, the possibility of a Dissolution might be lost sight of when they looked to the days they had secured. The probability was great that they would be able to bring on the question; that they would get a good vote of the House of Commons upon it, and he was not without hopes that action would be carried farther, and that before that event happens, something may be done to secure to women votes in the approaching crisis. (Cheers.)

Though they had been thus unfortunate in trying the chances of Parliament during the last two or three years, there were compensating circumstances which cannot be overlooked. Those years had not been unfruitful. They had been remarkable

in a very extraordinary degree by the increase of the political activity of women. (Cheers.) Even before the present Parliament began, women had votes in the election of Town Councillors. They had votes in the election of School Boards; they had votes in the election of Boards of Guardians, and they might even sit upon School Boards and Boards of Guardians. Well, it was a pretty strong thing to say that women were qualified to vote in all these elections, but were not qualified to vote for Members of Parliament. It was an obvious remark that Members of Parliament had some interest in the last vote, and perhaps the gaiety of heart with which they enfranchised women in respect of other elections deserted them a little when their own particular prospects were involved. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) He never could see any reasonable defence of the anomaly; but so it stood at the commencement of this Parliament. They had added to that line of argument by giving women votes for County Councils, and in the Bill now before Parliament, giving County Councils to Ireland, the same principle was involved. But they had done much more. There was now no section of political life which had not enlisted the active co-operation of women. All had asked for their work; all had asked for their help; all had enlisted their zeal. The Primrose League was the first in the field, and dated before the present Parliament. But they had now Women's Liberal Associations and Women's Liberal Unionist Associations (cheers), and whenever there was an election, entreaties came faster and faster to the organisers of those associations to "Send the ladies down" to the district or districts where the elections are taking place, to aid in educating the voters and in bringing them to the poll. Now what does this amount to? It might not have been done with the hearty good will of every politician of every party, but it amounted to a confession by the leaders of each political party, that women are able at least to form an opinion upon political questions. They are able to do more. So excellent is their judgment that they may be trusted to guide others in the formation of their opinions (cheers), and they had now the singular spectacle, on the part of some politicians, of asserting that women may be trusted to instruct others how to vote; but they are not to be trusted to instruct themselves. Now, had they ever heard of such a contradiction as that? Generally those who teach are most expert in practising what they teach. Could they imagine a person teaching swimming who did not know how to swim, or teaching the rudiments of horsemanship who was entirely ignorant of riding? But here are the women sought for, and women's meetings held, and women appealed to, to "come here," and "send there;" "give us your literature," "give us your arguments," "give us your canvassers." But there the matter stopped. They could not add "give us your votes."

He believed it would be impossible to withstand the argument afforded by the experience of recent years, and now that all parties were indebted to the political co-operation of women, there was no ground for denying them participation in electoral rights. (Hear, hear.) There was only one suggestion, he thought, which could be raised; and that suggestion was sometimes, but rarely, avowed. Generally, it was almost indignantly disavowed. There was a feeling, no doubt, on the part of some persons, that if women had votes, those votes would be exercised against the party to which they belong. Well, if there were persons who held this opinion—and he knew, privately, at least, that there were a few—it was held privately by most, because it was an opinion people were ashamed to confess. (Hear, hear.) That women capable of voting, qualified to vote, having all the interests involved in a political crisis at heart, and being concerned in all questions of national welfare, should be denied their vote because it was thought the opinion of the majority of them might be adverse to this or that political party, was a doctrine too shameful to be openly avowed, and he hoped too cynical to be secretly acted upon. (Loud cheers). But to reason with such persons on their own ground, he ventured to express the opinion that they were entirely deluded in their opinions. There was no reason for supposing, as between political parties, that the action of women would prevail more in favour of one than the other. They had seen something of it in municipal elections. They had seen more of it in School Board elections. In the questions which are dearest to women, he believed it was impossible for the keenest of party managers to say on which side the majority of women's votes are cast in the matter of those elections, and he did not believe that any person could speak with any confidence of the future as to the way women would vote with the majority,—Conservatives, or Liberals, or Nationalists, or Liberal Unionists, or in any other connection. Women were divided in their political opinions as men are. The one thing in which he thought they would be united, and with which they had in the past united, was something quite independent of party; a determination on their part to secure men of probity, of integrity, and of honour (cheers), to whatever political party they might belong. It was in the influence of the character of Parliamentary candidates and of Parliamentary representatives, that he believed the influence of women would tell; and he hailed, and was sure they would all hail, that influence if it was so exercised. (Cheers.) The reflex action upon women themselves he would not enter upon. It was a matter which to him had always been the prime motive for advocating this enfranchisement of women. To give them the vote would do something to enlarge the range of their sympathies, to raise the level of their character, and they, in their turn, would do much to elevate and purify political life. (Cheers.)

BRISTOL.

The annual meeting of the Bristol and West of England Society for Women's Suffrage was held at the offices of the society, 69, Park street, on February 27th. There was a good attendance. The chair was taken by Mrs. Beddoe, who, in opening the meeting, said it seemed that the crisis for which they had been working and waiting was now close at hand; it behoved them more than ever to put their shoulders to the wheel, and do their utmost to bring to the goal this measure which could no longer, at all events, be reproached as being a novelty (applause). In the ancient town to which she had now the honour of belonging, much interest was taken in the subject, as indeed there ought to be, for in the olden days it was not distrustful of women and of what are called their rights. History told them that for 500 years the affairs of Bradford-on-Avon were managed, and evidently very satisfactorily managed, by the Abbesses of Shaftesbury (hear hear.) Such a condition of things might well give courage to those timid politicians to whom the bare idea that at some unknown and remote period a woman might perchance sit in Parliament was such a bogie that they gave this as a reason for not doing the thing that was right and just; and within the last few days two debates had taken place in Parliament on matters of special interest to women. In one of these, a member, an opponent of women's suffrage, though a man they much respected, had carefully prepared statistics showing the attendance, in Liverpool and elsewhere, in Welsh Episcopal churches, also in Welsh Nonconformist churches. Now it would be different to what is usually the case if a majority of their worshippers were not women; yet Mr. Samuel Smith is one of those who would have them believe that politics do not concern women. Then, referring to Mr. Provand's Shop Hours Regulation Bill, she remarked that: If every place of business had to be closed at an appointed hour, it might be necessary to return to the Curfew Bell. But the question that concerned them was the proposal to legislate for the labour of adult women without giving women any voice in the matter. Some years ago she had had a good deal to do with the opening of a dwelling for day workers. Women and girls of all branches of industry in that had interviewed her, but the one stipulation that all made was that there should be no interference between them and their employers. They said "you ladies mean kindly, but we best understand our own affairs."

After the annual report had been read by the Secretary, Miss Blackburn, and adopted, Mrs. Harle moved, and the Rev. A. C. Macpherson seconded:—"That this meeting has heard with great satisfaction that Sir Albert Rollit has secured the 27th April for the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill, and earnestly trusts that the Bill may receive the support of the Government."

This was supported by Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, who said that the Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour were both in favour of this measure. She reminded the meeting that the Conservative Associations throughout the country, as represented by the delegates at the great Conference at Birmingham, were practically unanimous in favour of the change. Mrs. Hallett went on to refer to Mr. Provand's Bill for shortening the hours of labour of adult women in shops. Mr. Provand, in moving the second reading of his Bill, said it was "simply to bring women within the provisions of the Act," and the *Daily News*, in its comments, expressed satisfaction that as only women were included "the vexed question of regulating men's labour was not raised." Following in the same line the *Pall Mall* remarked that "all that this Bill discussed is a provision bringing adult women within the scope of the law." To read these statements people might suppose that to interfere with the bread-earning power of women was a matter of no consequence at all, and that to lessen their chances of employment was not a "vexed question" at all. Everyone who had considered the subject knew that the first result of such interference would be to drive women out of shops, replacing them by men, in London probably by foreigners. During the debate, members of Parliament said that they thought it absurd to defer such interference until women were enfranchised, seeing that such interference was for the benefit of women. But this was the whole vexed question. They had to determine whether such interference was or was not for the "benefit of women," and she (Mrs. Hallett) contended that until women were constituents of members of Parliament, it was impossible to secure serious and earnest investigation of subjects relating to their interests. They owed a debt of gratitude to the Home Secretary, Lord Cranborne, and Mr. Balfour, for their valuable speeches on this question, which speeches assured them that although the Bill had been permitted to pass a second reading, the clauses relating to adult women would have to be expunged. She concluded by urging that the friends of the Women's Suffrage Bill should exert themselves to secure the support of members of Parliament when the division took place on April 27th.

Brief mention may also be made of other meetings, including one at Broadway Hall, Hammersmith, the Rev. Prebendary Snowden in the chair; and in the Town Hall, Bradford-on-Avon, Canon the Hon. Sidney Meade in the chair. These were both addressed by Mrs. Fawcett, as also one at Southend-on-Sea, Major Rasch, M.P., in the chair.

A numerously attended drawing room meeting was held, by kind invitation of Captain and Mrs. James, at Lexham Gardens; and meetings of a similar character have been held in Porchester Terrace and at Wandsworth, by invitation of Miss Bell and Mrs. Shillington.

COLONIAL INTELLIGENCE.

NEW ZEALAND.

On August 24th Sir John Hall moved the second reading of his Women's Suffrage Bill, which provides that "In all purposes connected with and having reference to the right of voting in the election of the House of Representatives laws and Acts providing for the representation of the people importing the masculine gender shall include women." He concluded a forcible speech by saying that the principle had been affirmed in that House in 1880. It was again affirmed during the Premiership of Sir Robert Stout, on the motion of Sir Julius Vogel. In 1890 again there had been a large majority. On many occasions the principle had been affirmed, but they had been doomed to disappointment when it came to the practical application. He believed they were now near the end of their disappointment.

Mr. Pinkerton seconded the motion, which was opposed by Mr. Fish at great length, and a prolonged debate ensued, at the close of which the second reading was carried by 32 to 8—majority in favour 25. There were 12 pairs.

The Bill then went into Committee on September 3rd, when Mr. Cairncross moved the addition of the following clause:—"Every woman registered as an elector shall be qualified to be elected a member of the House of Representatives for any electorial district." This was carried by 30 to 24. The division was a curious one, seven of the eight members who had formed the minority against the second reading voting in favour of the new clause, and fifteen of those who had voted for the second reading voting against the addition. This is of itself sufficient to shew that the new clause was added with sinister intent; but if there were any doubt on the subject that is removed by the admission of Mr. Cairncross himself, in the subsequent proceedings of the Committee, that, "Although he had proposed the new clause which had just been inserted in the Bill, he intended, should there be a division, to go into the lobby against the third reading of the measure. He might be told this was an inconsistent vote. Probably it was; but he admitted his intention was to render the Bill still more distasteful to the country than it already was." The Bill was then read a third time without a division.

On September 9th it was introduced in the Legislative Council by Mr. Fulton, and after an adjourned debate on the following day was thrown out—the "ayes" being 15, "noes" 17; majority against, 2. It is noticeable that the two Maori members of the Legislative Council both voted against the Bill.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The Hon. J. Warren, on July 22nd, moved the second reading of the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, for placing women in the same position as men in the matter of voting for the Legislative Council. He pointed out that the Bill had passed in the Assembly in 1890, and also in the Council, and would have become law had it not been that some of the members of the Legislative Council were unavoidably absent on account of illness and other causes. He believed a large majority of the Council were in favour of the measure, which would place women possessed of property exactly on the same footing as men with a similar qualification.

The debate on the Bill was adjourned to 29th July, and again to August 5th, 12th and 26th, when the second reading was carried by 14 to 3. On September 2nd it went into Committee, when the Hon. W. Haslam moved to omit clauses 3, 4 and 5, and insert "In the Constitution Act and Electoral Act, 1879, and all other Acts amending the same respectively, the word *man* shall be taken to include *woman*, provided no woman shall be qualified or entitled to be elected as a member of either House of Parliament."

This was carried by 12 to 8, two of the Noes of the previous division voting with the Ayes, and four of the previous Ayes (including the introducer of the Bill, the Hon. J. Warren) with the Noes.

The third reading was passed on September 16th, by 10 to 9, when the President declared that inasmuch as there was not an absolute majority of the Council, the Bill did not pass.

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National Society for Women's Suffrage.

OCCASIONAL PAPER,

*Issued by the Central Committee, 10, Great College Street,
Westminster.*

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15th March, 1894.

London:
PRINTED BY VACHER & SONS, WESTMINSTER.

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NOTES.

WITH the opening of a new Session of Parliament, the Executive of the Central Committee desire to place before their members, and the many friends who have helped their work during the past months, some notes as to the prospects and progress of the Women's Suffrage movement.

THERE has never been a time of greater activity in the history of that movement. The vital political questions which have excited the public mind, the debates on the share which should be accorded to women in the duties and rights of the Parish Councils to be formed under the new Local Government Act, the anticipation of a Registration Bill which will re-open various electoral questions, all have helped to promote this activity, which has found a mode of combined expression in the Appeal from women to Members of the House of Commons, now being signed all over the kingdom.

THE expectation that the Registration Bill will be one of the foremost measures introduced by the Government in the Session of 1894, gives the Parliamentary friends of the movement the prospect of being able to introduce a motion for Women's Suffrage as an amendment to that measure.

THE difficulty of securing time in Parliament for the passage of any measure introduced by a private member has increased enormously in recent years. In the Session of 1893 no fewer than 307 Bills were introduced by private members. Of these only 39 got beyond the stage of Second Reading, and only 22 reached the final stage of the Royal Assent.

THE opportunity, therefore, of raising the question on a Government measure is of the utmost value, and the friends of the movement should watch the progress of the Registration Bill, so that when the opportunity arrives they may urge their Members to give their support to such amendments as our Parliamentary friends decide to bring forward.

The Central Committee have forwarded a request to Viscount Wolmer, M.P., that he will repeat the notice for an instruction, which he gave last year on the Registration Bill going into Committee.

THE Local Government Act, which received the Royal Assent on March 5th, will introduce some fresh considerations in any future measure dealing with the Parliamentary franchise for women, if the precedent of local franchises is adhered to for the Parliamentary franchise, as was done in the Bill introduced by Sir Albert Rollit in 1892. Notice of the clauses affecting women will be found at page 7.

THE Committee note with pleasure that by the enterprise of an esteemed worker in the women's

suffrage cause, a monthly paper, entitled *Women's Suffrage News*, has been started, "in the hope that it may prove a bond of union between all true workers in the cause of women's enfranchisement." The first number appeared on 25th January, and will be issued on the 25th of each month; price one halfpenny. Communications should be addressed to the Editor, at Messrs. Bale, 106, Great Titchfield Street, W.

THE following members have been added to the General Committee of this Society since the publication of the last Annual Report:—

Mrs. BRIDGES.	Miss STAPLETON (Tunbridge Wells).
Miss CONSTANCE ELDER.	The Lady FRANCES TURNER.
Mrs. HARLE (Falfield).	Mrs. EDWARD WALKER (Leeds).
Hon. Mrs. ARTHUR LYTTTELTON.	Miss C. E. WHITE (Charleville).
Lady NOTTAGE.	Viscount WOLMER, M.P.
Mrs. ARTHUR PATTON.	The Lady MAUDE WOLMER.
Mrs. PENDER (Thornby Hall).	

THE extension of the franchise to women in New Zealand has brought theory to the test of experience in one portion of the British Empire. The Electoral Act, which provides that "person includes woman," received the Royal Assent on September 19th, 1893, and a General Election took place on November 28th.

The accounts which have reached this country so far have been somewhat meagre, and for the most part somewhat biassed, either for or against; but taking all into consideration, and weighing one against

another, three things seem clear: (1) That women voted in large numbers. We hear on good authority that they comprised two-fifths of the number of those who recorded their votes. It would be interesting to know if the women in the county districts, for whom last year vote by post was proposed, comprised a fair proportion of these. (2) That confidence in the personality of the candidate usually outweighed allegiance to party—which accords with the expectations of most of those who are working for the suffrage in this country. (3) That notwithstanding considerable eagerness and excitement occasioned by the new experience, the elections were conducted in a most orderly and peaceful fashion.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE APPEAL.

THE Women's Suffrage Appeal extends steadily; new workers continue to arrive; fresh requests for books and literature, and applications for speakers, are continually received at the various Women's Suffrage offices. The Special Appeal Committee are therefore to be congratulated on having seen their way to extend the time for the collection of signatures to March 31st.

All who are at work are earnestly requested to send in all the signatures they can, to the Secretary of the Special Appeal Committee, 47, Victoria Street, S.W., or to the Secretary of whichever Women's Suffrage Society they may be in communication with, not later than March 31st.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

CLAUSES AFFECTING WOMEN.

Clause 3 (2).—No person shall be disqualified by *sex or marriage* for being elected or being a member of a parish council.

Clause 20 (2).—No person shall be *disqualified by sex or marriage* for being elected or being a guardian.

The above clauses effectually set at rest the uncertainty which has hitherto attended the election of married women as guardians, and any woman is now eligible as a parish councillor or as a guardian, who is on the Local Government Register of Electors, and has resided during the whole of the twelve months preceding in the parish or within three miles thereof.

After November 8th, when the first elections under the Act will take place, not only all the duties now performed by guardians will be liable to devolve on women, but also all the multifarious duties of the national housekeeping, so to say—all (other than ecclesiastical) performed by vestries and churchwardens and sanitary authorities—care of street paving and lighting, of wash houses, public libraries, recreation grounds, allotments, water-courses, drains, public ways, &c.

Clause 22.—The chairman of a district council, *unless a woman* or personally disqualified by any Act, shall be by virtue of his office justice of the peace for the county in which the district is situate.

Although several instances occur in history in which women have held the office of justice of the peace, it is not remarkable that the Legislature was unwilling to change existing precedents by a side issue. Accordingly Parliament has adhered to the modern precedent created by the service of women on the Poor Law Boards, but has declined to revert to ancient precedents in regard to the magisterial bench.

Clause 43.—For the purposes of this Act *a woman shall not be disqualified by marriage* for being on any local government register of electors, or for being an elector of any local authority, provided that a husband and wife shall not both be qualified in respect of the same property.

This clause was added in Committee of the House of Commons, by the President of the Local Government Board, the Hon. H. H. Fowler, in deference to an instruction, which was moved for by Mr. M'Laren, and carried on November 16th by a majority of 21, viz., 147 to 126.

This is the first statutory recognition of the electoral right of a married woman. At the same time it preserves the practice of one vote for the household by not allowing any double voting of husband and wife as joint occupiers.

THE NEW ZEALAND FRANCHISE.

THE passages in the Electoral Act of New Zealand, by which women have been admitted to the franchise in that colony, are as follows:—

The Act, which is entitled “An Act to amend and consolidate the Law relating to the Qualification and Registration of Electors, and the Conduct of Election of Members of the House of Representatives,” September 19th, 1893, provides in the interpretation clause that “person includes woman.”

Clause 6 (*qualification male and female*) enacts that—

“The Members of the House of Representatives shall be chosen in every electoral district appointed for that purpose by the votes of

the inhabitants of New Zealand, who shall possess within the district the qualifications defined by this Act, that is to say—

“(Freehold.) (1) Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, having of his own right, and not as a trustee, a freehold estate in possession situated within any electoral district of the value of twenty-five pounds, whether subject to incumbrances or not, and of or to which he has been seised or entitled either at law or in equity for at least six months next before the registration of his vote, and is not registered in respect of a freehold or residential qualification in the same or any other district, is entitled (subject to the provision of this Act) to be registered as an elector, and to vote at an election of members for such district for the House of Representatives; or,

“(Residential.) (2) Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, who has resided for one year in the colony and in the electoral district for which he claims to vote during the three months immediately preceding the registration of his vote, and is not registered in respect of a freehold or residential qualification for the same or any other district, is entitled (subject to the provisions of this Act) to be registered as an elector, and to vote at the election of members for each district for the House of Representatives.

“(No person to be registered in more than one district.) (3) No person shall be entitled to be registered on more than one electoral roll within the colony, whatever the number or nature of the qualifications he may possess, or wherever they may be.

“(Women not qualified for election.) Clause 9.—No woman, although duly registered as an elector, shall be capable of being nominated as a candidate, or of being elected a member of the House of Representatives, or of being appointed to the Legislative Council, and every nomination paper of a woman as a candidate shall be absolutely void and of no effect, and shall be rejected by the returning officer without question.”

Separate provision is made for the Maori vote in Part V. of the Act.

RECENT MEETINGS.

In January.—Meetings in connection with the Manchester Women's Suffrage Committee took place at ROCHDALE, on 24th, in the Parish Room, when Mrs. Wilson presided; an address was given by Mrs. Sheldon Amos. At GORTON, on 25th, in the Old Endowed School, Mr. H. P. Ilderton presiding, and addressed by Mrs. Sheldon Amos and the Hon. Mrs. A. Lyttelton.

On the 30th a meeting was held in the Vestry Hall, St. George's, BLOOMSBURY, kindly lent by the Rev. A. B. Boyd Carpenter, who took the chair. The meeting, which was crowded, was addressed by Mrs. Fawcett.

Drawing Room Meetings took place in LONDON, on 13th, by invitation of Mrs. John Hollond, at Upper Berkeley Place, Mr. Hollond in the chair, when Mrs. Fawcett, Rev. J. C. Ridgway and Mrs. Holah, were the speakers; also on 25th, at Wilton Place, by invitation of Mrs. Algernon Joy, Mr. Joy presiding, addressed by Mrs. Fawcett and Mrs. Westlake.

In February.—A very numerous meeting took place on 8th, by kind permission of Miss Holland, at Niddry Lodge, CAMPDEN HILL, Mr. Richard Shore presiding. The Rev. E. A. Abbott, D.D., Mrs. Fawcett and Miss Mary Gurney addressed the meeting; while an overflow meeting, in an adjoining room, was presided over by Mrs. Sterling, and addressed by Miss Vernon, Mrs. Mallet and Miss Blackburn.

At WANDSWORTH, a numerous audience met on 13th, by invitation of Mrs. Shillington, Spencer Park, to hear an address from Mrs. Fawcett; Mr. Shillington in the chair. At HAVERSTOCK HILL, on 16th, by invitation of Mrs. St. Osyth Eustace Smith, a similar meeting was addressed by Miss Louisa Bigg and Miss Blackburn, Mr. E. K. Blyth presiding. Mrs. Henry Lawrence arranged a gathering at Alenho, WIMBLEDON, on 19th, which was addressed by Mrs. Fawcett. Mrs. Fawcett also spoke, on 26th, at a meeting at LEYTONSTONE, arranged by the Rev. W. Manning, who presided; and, on 28th, at a meeting held at the Skinners' School for Girls, STAMFORD HILL, arranged by Miss Page.

In March.—An influential meeting took place on 7th at IPSWICH, in the Public Hall, presided over by Captain Pretzman, who was supported on the platform by Mr. R. L. Everett, M.P., Dr. Elliston, Miss Patteson, Mrs. W. C. Owen, Rev. Canon and Mrs. Bulstrade, &c. Mrs. Fawcett and Mr. McLaren, M.P., spoke to a resolution that the time had now arrived when the Parliamentary Franchise should be extended to duly qualified women, and pledging the meeting to support the Appeal from women to the House of Commons. This was supported by Mr. R. L. Everett, M.P., who spoke of the "gathering of such diverse elements on that one subject as striking testimony to the good sense of the English people. Every enfranchisement had been followed by good, and the inclusion of women in the franchise would be a lift up in the life of the country."

On the 9th, a meeting, to which teachers were specially invited, was kindly arranged by Miss Franks, at 13, York Place, Baker Street, when Mrs. Fawcett gave an address. Mr. Francis Storr took the chair.

On the 12th, by kind permission of Miss Mallet, a numerous meeting was held at Anlaby House, Highbury New Park, Mrs. John Hullah presiding. Mrs. Benjamin Clarke, Miss Griffin and Miss Blackburn being the speakers.

At all these meetings books for the Appeal were disseminated; as also at numerous successful drawing-room meetings which have taken place in connection with the Parliament Street Committee. Influential meetings in connection with local associations have taken place at Wolverhampton and Birkenhead; and a series of lectures has been given by Mrs. Stopes in North Wales. Several meetings have been held in Scotland, in connection with the Appeal Committee in Edinburgh.

While the above notes show the work carried on since the New Year, it should be remembered that over fifty public meetings and lectures, and many drawing-room meetings and conferences of workers had been held in connection with the various Women's Suffrage Committees and other women's organisations in the autumn and early winter.

As this goes to press important meetings are taking place in Cheltenham and Bath, and several others are in prospect after Easter.

The text of the Appeal is as follows:—

AN APPEAL FROM WOMEN
OF ALL PARTIES AND ALL CLASSES.

To the Members of the House of Commons.

GENTLEMEN,

Many of the women who sign this appeal differ in opinion on other political questions, but all are of one mind that the continued denial of the franchise to women while it is at the same time being gradually extended amongst men is at once unjust and inexpedient.

In our homes it fosters the impression that women's opinion on questions of public interest is of no value to the nation, while the fact of women having no votes lessens the representative character of the House of Commons.

In the factory and workshop it places power to restrict women's work in the hands of men who are working along side of women whom they too often treat as rivals rather than as fellow-workers.

In Parliament it prevents men from realizing how one-sided are many of the laws affecting women.

We therefore earnestly beg you to support any well-considered measure for the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women.

All who have not yet signed should apply **AT ONCE** for forms for Signature.

G-154 66 553 (14)

New

SPEECHES

AT A

GREAT MEETING IN SUPPORT OF THE
POLITICAL ENFRANCHISEMENT
OF WOMEN

HELD AT

QUEEN'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE
LONDON

ON JUNE 29TH, 1899

Published by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies

Head Offices—

20, Great College Street, Westminster;

39, Victoria Street, S.W.;

5, John Dalton Street, Manchester.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

SPEECHES

At a Great Meeting in Support of the Political Enfranchisement of Women.

Held at Queen's Hall, Langham Place, on June 29th, 1899.

THIS was a meeting arranged to welcome the delegates from abroad attending the International Congress of Women, then holding its quinquennial session in London. Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D., presided, amongst those present on the platform were Mrs. Benson; the Countess of Aberdeen; Lady Henry Somerset; Miss Susan B. Anthony (U.S.A.); Mr. Faithful Begg, M.P.; Hon. Mrs. Arthur Lyttelton; Hon. W. P. Reeves (Agent-General for New Zealand); Mrs. Wynford Philipps; Frau Stritt; Mr. J. T. Firbank, M.P.; Sir William Wedderburn, Bt., M.P.; Sir Wilfred Lawson, Bt., M.P.; Mr. Walter Hazell, M.P.; Mr. W. Johnston, M.P.; Mr. Charles McLaren, M.P.; Mr. John Wilson, M.P. (Govan); Lady Laura Ridding; Dr. Beddoe, F.R.S.; and Mrs. Beddoe; Mrs. Carmichael Stopes; Mrs. Eva McLaren; Lady Helen Munro Ferguson; Miss Emily Davies; Miss Ellaby, M.D.; Hon. Mrs. Bertram Russell; Mr. and Mrs. Russell Cooke; Lady Grove; Miss Honner Morton; Mr. and Mrs. Fisher Unwin; Lady Marjorie Gordon; Mr. Dhadabai Naoroji; Mr. Mark Oldroyd, M.P.; and Mrs. Oldroyd; Lieut. Col. J. W. Lawrie, M.P., and Mrs. Laurie; Sir John Leng M.P.; and Lady Leng; Mr. and Mrs. Haslam (Dublin); Miss Blackburn; Mrs. J. C. Croly (U.S.A.); Miss Bunney (Secretary Women's Liberal Federation); Mrs. Charles Baxter; Miss Palliser; Miss Roper; (Secretaries to the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies).

The following Delegates of the International Congress also supported the Chairman on the platform: Mrs. May Wright Sewell (U.S.A.); Baroness Alexandra Gripenberg (Finland); Madame von F. de Mountford (Palestine); Mrs. Willoughby Cummings (Canada); Mrs. Frank Gibbs (Canada); Mlle. Monod (France); Mrs. Gawler (South Australia); Mrs. Armitage (New South Wales); Dr. Cecilia Grierson, M.D.

(Argentine Republic); Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Stetson (U.S.A.); Dr. Aletta Jacobs, Mr. C. V. Gerritsen, Miss M. G. Kramers, Mrs. Klerck van Hogendorp, Mrs. Rutgers-Hoitsema (Holland); Miss Ellen Sandelin, M.D. (Sweden); Frau Cauer, Frau Dr. Selenka, Anita Augspurg, Fräulein Pappritz and Fräulein Dr. Schirmacher (Germany); Mdlle Vidart (Switzerland); Fröken Gina Krog (Norway).

MRS. FAWCETT, LL.D., opened the proceedings by expressing the great pleasure it was to her, on behalf of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, to welcome there that night, so many of the delegates attending the great International Congress of Women from all parts of the world. She regretted to have to announce two disappointments; Mr. Leonard Courtney, their staunch friend, was unfortunately detained in the House of Commons by pressing political work, and Dr. Cockburn, who had had charge of the Women's Franchise Bill, when it became law in South Australia, was unhappily prevented from attending owing to domestic bereavement. Mrs. Fawcett then went on to say: We are now at a moment of very exceptional interest. Within the last few days in London, there have been events of particular importance as regards the Women's Movement. I refer more especially to the Jubilee of Bedford College and to two great International Congresses which have been held in London, one of which is still in Session and many members of which we very heartily welcome among us to-night. Another interesting event, but one of a less satisfactory kind, is that which took place on Monday last, when the right of women to be elected as Councillors and Aldermen in the new London Bill was contemptuously rejected by the House of Lords. I think we may learn something from all these events. From the Educational Jubilee, we may learn courage and hope; who among those gallant pioneers who worked for the Educational Movement fifty years ago could have foreseen the great triumph of their cause? What prospect did there then seem of opening University Education to women in England and in nearly every country in Europe? To speak of our own country only, out of twelve Universities, nine are entirely open to women, and of the other three, two have opened their educational facilities and highest examinations to women. The fountains of knowledge are no longer sealed to those of both sexes who wish to drink of them. The work of opening the avenues of the higher education to women has been completely done; that should give us hope and should make us go on in the work on which we are engaged with unflinching courage and determination. If we look for a moment at those two great International Congresses, I think that they, too, have their lesson for us. They show the enormous vitality and the strength of this

Women's Movement in which we are engaged. Probably every country in Europe, besides the United States, Australia and our other Colonies have sent representatives to these Congresses, giving an idea of the world-wide nature of this movement which has gradually changed the ideals of women and the general conception of woman's place in society. Now, if we look for a moment at the least satisfactory of the three events I have mentioned—I mean the rejection of Clause 2 of the London Government Bill by the House of Lords—I think we may learn something from that also. Unfortunately, the spectacle of the House of Lords pursuing the "Gentle art of making Enemies," is not altogether unknown in English politics. The House of Lords has given us proof of the extent of the disapproval with which they regard the work of women on elected bodies in devoting themselves to alleviating the misery and distress of the lowest and most miserable portion of the population. But if we look at this question, I think we shall find some consolatory aspects connected with it, to which I shall briefly direct your attention. First of all, I think this action of the House of Lords will have some effect in gaining us converts to the cause of Women's Suffrage. There are many fair-minded friends—men and women—who will say that if such treatment is to be accorded to women who have done good work in the past—that they are to be rejected with contumely from being allowed to continue that good work in the future—that is additional proof that the only safeguard against this kind of thing is the possession of the Parliamentary Franchise. In words, which during the last few weeks have been very frequently found in the press—though not in reference to our question—these events have proved that "the possession of the franchise is of the first importance," and when once it is carried, other grievances will redress themselves automatically without any further struggle. There is another source of consolation also to which I want briefly to refer. I feel, as would be acknowledged too by the majority in the House of Lords themselves—that the moral and intellectual weight of the House of Lords was with those who supported Clause 2. I refer particularly to the noble speech of Lord Salisbury, which in some degree compensates us for the disappointment we feel at the result of the Division. I feel that the speech Lord Salisbury made on our behalf on Monday night will go far in the future to place him in the same category as that in which a former great Prime Minister, Pitt, now stands in the estimation of his successors, from the fact that years and years before those causes were supported by any political party, he stood out before his King and country as the advocate of the abolition of the Slave Trade and of Catholic disabilities. I think Lord

Salisbury will occupy a similar rank in the estimation of the future by the fine stand he made for us on this question. There is one more point I should like to urge upon you, especially upon the attention of our foreign friends present to-night, and that is that the point argued in the House of Lords last Monday was not the question of Women's Franchise; the question of women voting in the London local elections was not raised in any way. Even those who must sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death as regards this question never had the temerity to raise a voice against the right of women to vote in these local elections. That battle has been won and won thoroughly all over the British Islands. What was done on Monday was the denial of the right of women to sit on Municipal Councils. The right of women to sit on these bodies is a very different matter—or rather I should say, the right of the London ratepayer to be represented by that person whom he feels is best fitted to serve him.

We often hear a great deal about the thin end of the wedge. This seems to me a most unfortunate simile. We know what a wedge is—it is a foreign body of inanimate matter driven by force into an inert mass—generally also of inanimate matter, with the object of splitting or dividing it. Our movement does not represent anything of that sort. It represents an organic living force with all the strength behind it which vitality and vitality alone can give. We do not seek to drive into Society something foreign to its own nature. We claim to be a part of the Society in which we live, a living outgrowth of its energy; and we find a proof of this in the fact that this outgrowth is to be found in every country of progressive Western civilization. If we look at Russia, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, or even Spain and Italy, and last, but not least, at the great English-speaking nations—the United States, the United Kingdom and her Colonies—we see in everyone of them that this Movement is a movement of living growth and vitality. It is this which causes us to feel that it is a power which will continue to grow in the future. I wish it had been possible at this meeting to call on representatives of all these nations to tell us of the progress of this Movement in their own countries. For obvious reasons, that was not possible, and therefore we have made this meeting a congratulatory one—a meeting of welcome to the foreign Delegates who are attending the International Congress. We shall ask a few of them to tell us what means they have found the most effective in carrying out the work in their own countries and bringing it to a successful issue.

MR. FAITHFULL BEGG, M.P., said: No one is more entitled to the place of honour on this occasion than Mr. Courtney, and I

exceedingly regret that his unfortunate absence should cause this duty to devolve upon me. The resolution I have the honour to move is as follows:

“That this meeting of Women's Suffragists of Great Britain and Ireland, offers a hearty welcome to delegates from all parts of the world, now attending the International Congress of Women, who have, in many instances successfully striven to promote the great movement for the recognition of the citizenship of women by opening to them the political franchise. We thank them for the grand lead they have given us, and we, in our turn, desire to give a good lead to those nations and colonies less advanced than ourselves. We feel that it lies with the United Kingdom and her Colonies, and the United States of America to carry forward and complete the principle of representing institutions, and to demonstrate to the world that the representation of the people, means representation of the whole people, and is manifestly incomplete as long as a whole sex is excluded.”

As Mrs. Fawcett has said, in her opening remarks, we have succeeded, within recent years, in gaining a remarkable triumph, and I am very hopeful that, as time goes on, we shall be able to carry still further the object we all have so much at heart. Our Chairman referred to the consolatory aspects of the question at present. Perhaps it would not be out of place if I explained in a few words why I entirely agree with her that there are consolatory aspects, and that we have no reason to feel cast down. We all take the keenest interest in the question that has been discussed within the last few days. But I should like to point out that even in this there is a consolatory aspect, because, to my own knowledge, many persons interested in Women's Suffrage, and perfectly willing to grant votes to women, are not willing to go further; and we must not be too hard on our friends who are willing to go with us on the question of the Suffrage because they are not willing to go a little further with regard to the London Government Bill. I should like to draw your attention, and particularly that of our foreign friends, to the reasons why there is much that is consolatory and much that is encouraging. It is true that for many years this question has been advocated, and success has not yet followed the efforts of friends of the cause. But, after all, the time that has elapsed since the reactionary period began is not a long time in the history of political movement. In 1832, a great blow was struck at Women's Franchise by the Reform Bill, and later, in 1835 and 1836, the Municipal Franchises were taken away. It is equally true that for many years it was impossible to restore these privileges. But in 1869 the Municipal Franchise was successfully restored, although the great prophet of the movement, John Stuart Mill, was unsuccessful in carrying his amendment. It may be said that in that year the low-water mark of the movement was

shadow of which are many shipwrecked lives and many desolated homes. Woman is said to be "the angel of the hearth," then let her not sit so long with drooped and folded wings; let her spread the strong pinions of her extended sympathies and bear upward into better conditions the heavy burden of human want and human woe. It is said, too, that if women had a vote that men and women would disagree, and there would be serious domestic and social discord; but remember that men have never yet been found to agree on any single point whatsoever, and women have never yet been found to agree on any single point of any kind. Is it likely that at this late day they will at last learn to agree, only in order that they may disagree with one another? My earnest appeal to you women delegates from so many lands is to let no petty, personal, ephemeral consideration stand between you and the demand for this great reform. I beg you to persist in it, remembering that it is the only sure foundation of all you care for: the power to do right more efficiently, to obtain right more rapidly, to retain right more certainly, and without it, the structure of women's new and noble liberties is necessarily insecure and incomplete. The vote is sometimes spoken of as if it were a little thing, but it is not a little thing. Wrapped up in the heart and soul of the English-speaking people is the firm conviction that the vote is a great thing, the sign of worth and dignity—the possession of which puts a hall-mark of excellence upon a man. Five million women have had to enter the labour market, and there, suffering under many a disadvantage, woman is tried in the fire of life, and has she not proved herself of sterling metal? If that be so, then stamp *her* with the hall-mark! Rightly understood and rightly used, the political voice is the conscience of the nation, that still, small, but most potent voice, that may inspire the body politic with the living spirit of the people. Therefore claim the vote for women, that the structure of government may be breathed into by the animating spirit not only of the manhood, but the womanhood of the nation.

The HON. MRS. ARTHUR LYTTELTON, speaking in support of the resolution, said: I stand before you here very apologetically instead of Dr. Cockburn, the great champion of women in South Australia. I can in no way fill his place, for he could have told you of the success of Women's Suffrage in that country, and one ounce of proof is worth a great deal of prophesied success. I have been asked why we devote so much time and energy to this propaganda instead of devoting ourselves to the more obvious good causes that lie before us. My answer is that not only does Women's Suffrage lie at the back of all these philanthropic movements and that none of them will succeed without it; but that there are in the lives of States as in the lives of

individuals, psychological moments, times when certain things ought to be done; and if they are not done, then the State or individual suffer for it. To my mind we are fast reaching one of these moments in the present condition of women in our country. Owing to the advance of civilisation, we have attained a very different position from that which we held fifty years ago. The increased safety of our streets, the use of steam, the general progress of civilisation, even the bicycle, has helped to change the position of women enormously in the last fifty years. Their freedom is now an established fact; but freedom without responsibility is a very dangerous thing, and this is fast becoming the condition of women in many parts of the world. I don't know if you have ever come across a certain poem of Keats called "Woman":

"Oh, who can e'er forget so fair a being?
Who can forget her half retiring sweets?
God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
For man's protection."

When I heard that many of the Peers who voted against the Clause allowing women to serve on the new Councils, did so because the women they knew urged them to vote against it, I felt that those women wished to be considered as "milk-white lambs bleating for man's protection." The great difficulty in our way is that there is no one at this moment whose direct interest it is to press forward Women's Suffrage. Everyone—I speak more especially of the governing bodies of the male sex—is more afraid of what women will do than hopeful of what they will gain from the women's vote. Thus, if this great movement is to succeed, it must be through enthusiasm only, and it is therefore incumbent upon all who believe in it to work with their whole heart and soul and strength. We have, as I cannot but think, a very great amount of strong opposition yet to face, and it will be very hard work to overcome it. The adjustment of the relations of the sexes, like those of the classes, will take a long time to accomplish. When once Women's Suffrage is obtained we shall hear much less of the perhaps well-founded charge that we think too much of women's questions, and that we exalt ourselves at the expense of men. We do so because persons who are oppressed are always self-asserting, and the way to prevent this self-assertion is to put them on a level with men. We ought to be inspired by the presence here of friends from all parts of the world to work with more vigour and more enthusiasm. The century is waning to its close, but I hope the childhood of the next century will see Women's Suffrage an accomplished fact, and that with it there will come a higher, stronger, nobler, and, I confidently believe, a more Christian view of the relations between men and women.

The resolution was then put and carried by acclamation.

MISS SUSAN B. ANTHONY (U.S.A.), who was received with prolonged applause, the audience all rising, in responding to the resolution said: Mrs. President, Officers and Members of the Suffrage Societies of Great Britain and Ireland and of all the world over, I wish I might be worthy of the honour which Mrs. Philipps gave me of being one of those who, more than fifty years ago, assembled in the little town of Seneca Falls, New York, and made the declaration that the right to vote is the under-lying right, the one which protects all other rights. But I was not there. Lucretia Mott was there, and Martha C. Wright, whose daughter sits beside me, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—all signers of the call for that first Convention. I hear all these women and the men also, asking, "Why is it that when this first proclamation for the ballot was made in the United States more than half a century ago, other countries are getting ahead of us?" Well, I can assure you there are many reasons. It is not from any lack of hard work and persistent effort on the part of the handful of women who have stood at the front of this movement in our country; but the complications are very unlike those in your own country. Suppose that here in England, after all your labours and after your magnificent champions—from John Stuart Mill and Jacob Bright down to Mr. Begg—had worked in your Parliament for years, had urged the enactment of a law, and succeeded in getting it through the House of Lords, that the question then had to be voted on by every elector in the mines, the factories and the rural districts of every county of England, how much would you expect to get all at once? And that is the difficulty with us.

Our revolutionary Fathers proclaimed equal political rights. At first they made practical application to a very few men only, and during the more than a hundred years' battle in our country, those great principles have been gradually extended to one class after another. In the beginning only Church members voted, then only rich men, then only white men, then only men; that is, we had an aristocracy of the Church, then an aristocracy of men of wealth, then an aristocracy of white men, and at last we now have an aristocracy of *men*. We are simply demanding to-day the application of our fundamental principle of political equality to the other half of our citizens. We are asking for nothing new, but simply for the practical application of the old doctrine that was declared by Hancock and Adams and all the old revolutionists, who rebelled against King George because he insisted on taxing them without giving them the right of representation. We are insisting to-day that the men of the United States shall no longer continue to violate their principles—to

tax women and deny them representation. We have what you might call forty-five Englands; that is, we have forty-five States, and each State Legislature must first pass a resolution submitting the question to be voted upon by the men of that State. We have succeeded in gaining the Franchise in four States of the Union by this slow process.

Another hindrance I want to mention to you: every single year, over a quarter of a million of foreign born men are landed on our shores, fresh from the monarchies of the Old World, who know nothing at all of the Declaration of Independence, of the principles of free and equal government, and we have, as General Grant once said, a "big job on our hands," we have to educate a quarter of a million of men every year into the principles of our American Institutions. And I want to say to you, my good friends, that in everyone of the fifteen States in the Union in which the question has been voted upon, if only the native born men had had the franchise, the women in every one of them would have had the ballot to-day. I am not sorry that those men who do not understand our Institutions have the right to vote, for they never would understand them if they had not that right. So we must wait with patience this slow process of education. And we have been very patient; in our half century of agitation and education we have gained Woman's Suffrage in four States! And besides that, women have Municipal Suffrage in one State, a vote on matters of taxation in several others, and School Suffrage, to a greater or less extent, in twenty-three States. In over one-half of the States of our Union, women are voting to-day. In Louisiana, one of the old Slave States, on the sixth day of this month, women taxpayers in the city of New Orleans, for the first time in history cast their ballots on the question of taxing the people of that city for the purpose of building sewers and improving sanitary conditions. The men were so considerate of the women when they made that constitutional provision, that they arranged for them to vote by proxy if they were too modest to go to the ballot box. When some of the women attempted to get a proxy they learned that, by the law of Louisiana, a married woman's name on a certificate would not stand, and therefore they were compelled to go to the ballot-box.

The distance we have gone in the last fifty years is beyond computation. Before I sit down I will tell one little incident illustrating the condition of things when we started. I had been a teacher in the State of New York for fifteen years—from the age of fifteen to thirty. A State Teachers' Convention was held in my city of Rochester. Over a thousand women had gathered in that Convention and perhaps two hundred men. Up to that time no woman's voice had ever been

heard in one of these Conventions; only men had reported the result of their experience, because it was considered improper for a woman to speak in public. Those men appointed a committee to prepare resolutions, and one of these declared that teachers were not respected as were ministers, lawyers and doctors. In discussing that resolution one man declared that the profession of teacher was higher than that of a doctor, of more use to the community; another, that it was higher than that of the lawyer, and a third even affirmed that it was of more service to the world to train the young than it was to try to reform them after they had been brought up in a crooked way. "And yet," said these men, "Ministers, lawyers and doctors are treated with the greatest respect, invited into the best families, often elected to high offices, whereas schoolmasters are treated slightly, and are often called Miss Nancies and old grandmothers!" I listened with a great deal of interest, and at length—having been born and reared a Quaker, and always taught that God inspired a woman to speech just as well as a man—I rose in my seat and said, "Mr. President!" The President was a Professor of Mathematics at West Point, a pompous man, wearing a blue coat, brass buttons and buff vest. He stepped to the front of the platform and, inserting his thumbs in his armholes said, "What will the lady have?" The idea never entered that man's cranium that a woman could rise in her seat and address the chair just like a man! And I said, "Mr. President and gentlemen, I would like to say a word on the question under discussion." "Then," said Professor Davies, "What is the pleasure of the Convention?" And he looked down to this little handful of men on the front seats, never casting a furtive glance to the thousand women crowding that hall. One man moved that the lady should be heard, and another seconded, and they discussed the question for half an hour! At last, by a very small majority, it was decided that the lady should be heard, and I managed to say: "Mr. President and gentlemen, I have listened to your discussion with a great deal of interest, but it seems to me that none of you quite comprehend the cause of the disrespect of which you complain. Do you not see that so long as Society says a woman hasn't brains enough to be either a minister, a lawyer, or a doctor, but has ample brains to be a teacher, that every man of you who teaches school practically acknowledges that he hasn't any more brains than a woman?" and sat down. As I passed out of that hall at the close of the Session I heard many a woman whispering to another, "Who is that creature?" "Where did she come from?" "I was never so ashamed in my life, I wished the floor had opened and swallowed me up!" They were honest, they really believed

it was degrading to a woman to speak. The next morning Professor Davies, in calling the Convention to order, assumed his pompous position and said: "I have been asked why it is that women are not put upon the committees, why they are not invited to prepare reports, and so on." And then he continued: "Look at this magnificent hall, at the beauty of the entablature, the symmetry of the shaft, and the strength of the pedestal. Could I be instrumental in dragging from its proud elevation that beautiful entablature and rolling it in the dirt and dust that surround the pedestal? No, Heaven forbid!" And he was quite sincere, and really believed that if a woman stood in an audience and spoke she would be degraded to the level of a man. Exactly so now, men are afraid that if women vote, if they hold office, if they sit in Congressional and Parliamentary halls, they will degrade themselves to the level of men!

THE HON. W. P. REEVES said: Unlike previous speakers I make no pretensions to eloquence. You do not expect me to deal with the past or with the future, to tell you the long story of oppression and injustice in the past or to soar upwards into the glorious hopes and possibilities of the future. You want me to tell you about the common-place, work-a-day present. Yet there is some satisfaction in dealing with an actual fact, and I have come here to speak about the work of Women's Suffrage in two British Colonies. Is England proud of her Colonies? When it comes to telling foreign nations of the grandeur and growth of the British Empire I hear Englishmen say that our Colonies are very fine things indeed—vigorous, robust, progressive, and even great; but when it comes to taking a hint or two on domestic reform from those colonies, of profiting by example—then, one hears that they are small, young, a long way off, and peopled by an inexperienced race. Well, they are some distance away, and they are young countries. But it does not follow that everyone in a young country rejoices in the first bloom of youth. The British Colonies are peopled by men and women who are uncommonly like the people of the mother country; they are of the same race, profess the same religion, read the same books—to some extent even the same newspapers—wear the same dress, are governed in many respects by the same laws, even share the same prejudices and obey some of the same social conventions: and they are uncommonly proud of it. True, the white people of New Zealand number but three-quarters of a million, and the people of South Australia about half that number. Yet I cannot help thinking that as they are distinguished by industry, sobriety, obedience to the law and a general wholesome condition physically and morally, that it may not be beneath the dignity even of the people of this great

metropolis, to study their experience and institutions. Female Suffrage has been the law in New Zealand for between five and six years. Now when a child is five and a half years old no doubt it is rather soon to predict what sort of a man or woman that child will become, but I think you may predict, if it is robust and well-grown, that it has a good chance of living a healthy, good and strong life. Female Suffrage is a very healthy youngster indeed; it has come to stay in New Zealand and South Australia, and so well and comfortably does it work in both Colonies that the only complaint raised against it is that it has not produced the revolutionary results its opponents predicted. They expected a tornado; they only met a gentle breeze; and they have the bad grace to complain of it. I do not mean to say that it necessarily follows that when Female Suffrage becomes law in this country—as I hope and believe it will before very long—that exactly the same complaint will be made after five years; but exactly the same sort of evil predictions as I have heard here, were launched at the head of the movement at the Antipodes before it became law. We heard exactly the same tales about neglected children, abandoned husbands, vile cooking, untidy houses and a general falling off of feminine grace, sweetness and charm. None of these evil effects have come about; social life in New Zealand is very much the same as it was before, and if at election time a man finds that the lady next to whom he sits at dinner is able to talk in a practical way about the political questions of the day—that certainly does not make dinner time duller or less interesting. What has been most striking and noteworthy of all has been the cool rational good sense with which woman has applied herself in our part of the world to discharging her duties as a citizen. This she does very much as rational men do, and on many subjects takes the same sort of view. A previous speaker remarked that one objection advanced in this country against Women's Suffrage is that women's intellect is instinctive and emotional. I daresay that in her relations with man, woman displays an amount of sympathy and self-sacrifice that makes her seem—to man—a very instinctive, emotional and irrational creature; no doubt she treats him a great deal better than he deserves. But it has occurred to me sometimes, whether man in his relations with woman—especially younger men in their relations with younger women—may not sometimes seem to a woman to be a little instinctive and emotional also? I can well imagine that the younger of my sex do not always seem to be the most severely logical of human creatures in their relations with the younger of the opposite sex. But it is an actual fact that in the Australian Colonies woman has taken her part as a citizen on common sense and business lines. After five

years of the Suffrage I can truthfully say that New Zealand is more prosperous now than she has been at any time during the last twenty years. You may take my word for it that the five and a half years of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand has only strengthened the conviction with which the majority of that colony passed the law which initiated it. And as it came suddenly, almost as an agreeable surprise, to those who had hoped for it over a long series of years, so I venture to believe that it will come suddenly and unexpectedly some day in England; and though I daresay some of the enthusiastic supporters of the movement may have to confess, after five years' experience, that it has not brought about the millenium, still its opponents will have to confess that the heavens have not fallen and that the empire still stands where it stood.

FRAU MARIE STRITT (Germany) followed. She said: As the only speaker here to-night representing one of the less-advanced nations—for, as you doubtless know, German women have not as yet arrived at the point of demanding political rights, at least, the demand has not been officially put on their programme—you may think it a presumption on my part and humiliating for me to speak to the resolution. But I feel by no means humiliated, for I hope not only to lay clearly before you the reasons why we are apparently so far behind in the Suffrage question, but also to prove to you that German women have clearly recognised the nature and aims of the movement for the emancipation of women, and that we are in harmony with our sisters all over the world in the conviction that we shall and can attain our full human rights only through our full civil and political rights, and by taking part in the legislation of our country. Constitutional and Parliamentary reforms are, comparatively speaking, new and strange conceptions on the horizon of the Germans. The German citizen's right to vote, to take his share in the government of the country, is to-day still looked upon as a valuable acquisition rather than as a national right, and is, to a certain extent, only considered as a reward for his general military duty.

This aspect has of course asserted its influence also on the German Women's Movement; its first bodies considered the Suffrage not so much the foundation, as the sheltering roof of the house of the future to whose building they contributed the stones. They were of opinion that women should first make themselves fit for the Suffrage by better education, by all professions being open to them, but that means of fitness, as the English and American pioneers always thought, and as the younger German leaders agree, can only be gained by the Suffrage. That Suffrage belongs rightly to the tax-paying woman citizen just as surely as it belongs to the tax-paying man; without that right women

must at best content themselves with only fragments of their full human rights. An exclusively male legislation cannot do justice to the other half of society. When the first Women's Suffrage Bill was brought before Parliament, Louisa Otto—whom we call the mother of the German movement—and others, openly dwelled upon the necessity of the Suffrage, but recommended that those claims should no longer be brought, or even mentioned for the present. They were afraid on the one hand of rousing the worst feelings of the German men, accustomed for long years to absolute lordship, on the other of intimidating the German women, accustomed for long years to humility and suppression. These tactics have been followed for nearly thirty years, but things have changed, and we have at last learned that too much prudence may tend to imprudence, and that to avoid misunderstanding, things should now be called by their right names. But the generally unfavourable and negative results in our Reichstag regarding questions such as the opening of Colleges, Universities, and liberal professions to women, labour legislation for women, etc., constantly give us fresh proof of how badly the interests of our sex are watched over by men, and that women can only be effectually represented by women themselves. So to-day, we openly say this in our women's journals and pamphlets, at every Convention, even at those of the National Council which can only deal with subjects on which all the members heartily agree. In short, we propagate the principles of Women's Suffrage at every opportunity, but only, I am bound to say, as an ideal claim.

The reason why no Women's Suffrage Society exists in Germany, why no Women's Suffrage Bill has been presented in Parliament does not lie either in the want of knowledge or foresight of the leading persons, or in cowardly fear of public opinion, it lies in external circumstances. There still exists in most German States a special law forbidding school-boys, ministers and women to take part in any political society or political meeting. That is to say, no woman may become a member of any political society and the presence of a woman in the meeting of a political party can cause its dissolution by the ever-present police-agent. Thus, you see, an insuperable obstacle still stands between us and throwing down of this barrier to the freedom of our sex. Our National Council, which at the present time represents the woman question in Germany, at its last Convention in Hamburg, unanimously resolved to take its stand for the Suffrage. I hope that at the next International Congress, we may be able to announce a hopeful commencement of the action taken by German women as the inevitable struggle for their right of self-government. Till then we cannot do better than rejoice heartily in the great results

our happier sisters are obtaining in the Suffrage movement. No one takes such a heartfelt interest in your struggles and victories as we German women do. Our movement is an International one, our question, a question of humanity, so we greet every fresh vote for the Suffrage Bill in the English Parliament as a vote given in our favour. We see in every new star on the banner of the American women a star of hope which has risen for us too, which shines also upon our future and the future of our children.

LADY HENRY SOMERSET said: It was not a woman who was pleading against her wrongs or claiming her rights, but one of the broadest-minded and best-balanced intellects of this generation, who said that "the demand that woman should have the vote was the first organised protest against the injustice which has brooded over the character and destiny of one half of the human race. No where else," said Wendell Phillips, "under any circumstances has a demand ever yet been made for the liberties of one whole half of our race."

We have only to trace the history of all enlightened government to see the evolution by which it has come slowly from a past of tyranny and a reign of force, and has little by little expanded under the light of religion and civilisation, and each reform as it came forward, has been combatted by the inherent selfishness of those who desired to maintain existing conditions against justice and right. First, the freedom of all classes had to be established; then the freedom to obtain the necessaries of life; then the freedom of expression of thought and opinion; then the freedom of religious conviction—inch by inch this liberty has been fought for, by those who have been in every succeeding generation the pioneers of wider thought. In every struggle the social fabric of the past has been against the progressive movement of the future.

It is, therefore, no wonder that a reform that strikes a vital blow at the whole social fabric of every nation is slow in coming—so slow, that to some it seems an almost hopeless delay: but although every year brings to some of us the thought that we are individually, perhaps less likely ourselves, to see the righting of this wrong and the triumph of justice, I am not sorry that time intervenes; for time means much to woman at this present crisis; time means education, a juster understanding of the real principles that underlie the demand, a truer conviction of the necessity of reform.

The day has almost gone when it is necessary to make any statement as to the justice of the principle that women, as tax-paying members of civil society, are entitled to the same privileges as tax-paying men. Granted for a moment that woman is intellectually inferior, that it is impossible for women

to look upon great questions with the same balance as men, that it would be impossible for any woman to attain the intellectual heights to which men have climbed—I am not at all disturbed by these arguments. The humblest and the feeblest man has civil rights which are denied to women. There is no competitive examination among men for the vote, for this would infallibly eliminate a large proportion of voters whose intellect (although male) is at best mediocre. I understand that a man votes because of the eternal justice of the principle that taxation and representation must be co-extensive; that burdens and privileges must go together. It is the basis, I believe, of the government of all free countries.

Woman may be essentially different in intellect from man; but at any rate none on reflection can deny that the average woman ranks with the average man: that if a man's privileges are not accorded to him by any measure of intellect, while our civilisation allows a woman to hold property, to be the guardian of her children, it seems almost within the range of possibility that she would be likely to be able to vote as well as a man on whom is thrown the same responsibility.

But there is one point that proves conclusively the fact that where responsibility is given to woman she has not failed. Consider the Queens that have been great in history, women who rank amongst the greatest monarchs the world has known. They were not picked women, not women chosen because they were intellectually supremely greater than most of their sex, but women to whom the accident of birth brought the responsibility. Can you deny the statesmanship of women, with such examples as Queen Elizabeth, Queen Anne, Maria Theresa, Catharine II. or Margaret of Austria? And gathered as we are to-day in the mother-land, have we not a supreme instance of this in Queen Victoria? It is necessary, therefore, to admit that when responsibility has been thrown upon woman she has proved the equal of man.

Again we are told that the responsibilities and cares of woman bind her so completely that it is impossible that her mind should be at liberty to consider and weigh the different questions which should affect her views in political life. Allowing that the woman's responsibilities are heavy, and granted that her work must absorb nearly all her time, even then to my mind the objection has no weight. How about the responsibilities of men in professional life? The doctor who has a hundred lives hanging in the balance, and whose thought is day and night engaged in their physical cure; the head of a college on whom rests the care of hundreds of young men: the general who has to plan his campaign: the merchant whose mind is absorbed with schemes of speculation. They have still sufficient leisure left to consider political questions and to vote.

And then there is another argument perhaps more specious, and that is that woman may safely trust all her interests to the watchful care of man. No one is more fully aware of what women owe to men than I. No one deprecates more the tendency to range the interests of women's questions as against the interests of men. The whole status of woman would have but little interest to me if it were not to my mind a part of the great human question in which is involved the happiness and welfare of mankind. The question is not only, Is it best for women, but, Is it best for men: and my feeling strongly is that while I believe men have legislated in many instances fairly on questions pertaining to women, it is absolutely impossible for them to understand the intricacies of a woman's position as woman can herself.

Why is it that women inspectors have been an infinite boon to the factory? Why is it that women Guardians have been a blessing to the workhouse, that their presence on Vestries has been of value? Because there are details and aspects of every question better understood by women, and this is not narrowed down to municipal life alone, but on the great social questions women's views would be in many instances likely to be more correct, more practical, than the views of men. Moreover, all who feel strongly upon social legislation realise that woman's vote is essential to the welfare of the State, just because these are the questions that would keenly interest the woman voter.

But then men turn to what they believe form the interest of the largest proportion of women. They say, "Look at the fashion papers, look at the literature that woman reads, and tell me that the average woman is fitted to be a voter." I do not wish to compare the frivolities of women with the frivolities of men (sometimes we would wish that the follies of men could be called by a name as innocent as that), but I merely wish to emphasise the fact that responsibility is the greatest instrument for education. We have all seen it again and again. We have seen an empty-minded man or woman hold out hands to accept some serious responsibility and from that hour become changed. The frivolity is gone, the responsibility has moulded the character, and the very questions that seemed to be uninteresting and unimportant have become vital.

And if this is so, by what right is woman to be denied the education of responsibility? It may be true that man is ready to represent her politically, but he bears none of the burdens that are attached to her citizenship. When a woman is left with her young family, no man comes forward to pay her taxes. When a woman is sentenced by the law, she bears her own punishment; no man bears it vicariously. The women of Germany and of Italy labour on the highway and the harvest

field; in France you see them tilling the soil. I have not noticed that men think it necessary to relieve them of the burden of labour. They are very willing that woman should take her place in sharing the world's toil.

The charge of the children is considered to be woman's peculiar domain, and those who oppose our movement lay more emphasis on this than on any other aspect of the question. "What can a woman want more," they say, "than to fulfil her mission in educating and caring for children?" But I maintain here again that woman's interest in this her special domain has not been protected. A woman's child is only her own so long as that child is born under shameful conditions (and then the child, so wrongly called illegitimate—for there is no illegitimacy save in the relations of the father and the mother—belongs to the woman); but if for any reason it is impossible that the woman should remain with the father when he is her husband, if his drunkenness or brutality makes it obvious that he is unfitted for parental duty, the child, until she can prove her case, belongs according to the State solely to the father. A little while ago, a father had the power to will away the child from its mother, and although the laws have been greatly remedied in this respect, they still remain in a most unsatisfactory condition. A woman goes into a court of law handicapped, not because she has not an equal case to prove, but because she has to start with the assumption that the children are not hers but belong to her husband, and therefore, to obtain their custody, she has a double burden of proof to produce. Many other points might be cited in which it is obvious that in those very departments which are woman's chief sphere, her interests have not been guarded.

What are the questions that are involved in the government of any nation? Our relations with foreign countries, our finance, the religious, educational, and moral questions that affect the social life, the sanitary state of our cities, streets, and houses. I do not think that anyone can be complacent with the conditions that we have arrived at even during the reign of the progressive ideas of this last century, or seriously satisfied with the vice and misery that surrounds thousands of our population, with the swarming multitudes of children growing up in densest ignorance, with the worn and weary men and women whose life is sweated in underground cellars, with the hopeless starving multitude who are many of them driven by their conditions into lives of vice and sin, with the harrowing, heart-breaking social problems that meet us at every turn. These rise up before us to tell us that the government of the past has not been an unmitigated success: and it may be that when the intellect of woman, differing as it may from that of

man, is brought to bear upon some of these questions, the best interests of the masses will be involved in their political emancipation. No one who has watched the marvellous ingenuity of the woman to whom the earnings of, say, 15s. a week are entrusted, to be expended on a family of eight or nine, all of whom have to be fed, clothed, and provided for in every particular—can have failed to observe that woman is an adept at solving some of the most difficult financial problems; and this responsibility is placed upon her in almost every home among the working classes.

Another objection that is constantly advanced is that the political differences that might exist between married people would render the exercise of her political responsibility dangerous to domestic happiness. But I would urge, Is there not at the present moment often conscientious difference of opinion between married people on highest points of duty? Women are allowed independent religious opinions; they may change their religion after marriage, and there is no question upon which more bitterness can arise than differences of religious views. But I do not think it has ever been urged that for this reason a married woman should have no religious individuality, but rather I believe that with a better education and a juster view of their relations, there will be more mutual toleration as individual responsibility increases, between the man and woman who each recognises the other's opinions, intellectual attainments, and duties.

But whatever may be the arguments that can be advanced against the proposition to give woman her political freedom, I believe that we must ask ourselves on this as on all other questions, if there is a principle of right or wrong involved, if there is not a sense of justice that should turn the scale: and if it is true that the education, the responsibility, the readjustment of property law, and a thousand other questions, must force us to the conclusion that the time has come when such freedom must be given to women, and such responsibility entrusted to them. Then I believe it is for all to side with the right, to trust God, and we shall see in the end that such trust will prove to be expedient.

It has been well-said that "our sense of justice will dictate that the being who is to suffer under laws shall first personally assent to them," that the being whose industry Government is to burden, should have a voice in fixing the character and the amount of that burden; and I believe that when responsibility is accepted, not from human hands but from that Infinite Wisdom which establishes the rules of right, those who most dread the effect of woman's political emancipation will realise that far from deteriorating her character, it will have unfolded

her moral nature, and that as she studies the great human questions with which she is called to deal, she will become more prudent, more sagacious, under the stimulus and check of responsibility.

But there is another reason why I feel that the vote given to women will be of inestimable benefit, and that is because I think it ought to tend to create a greater accord between the moral standards of men and women; for if woman is to mould a new life, it must be that instead of increased responsibility dividing the ways, it should bring them nearer together; for every cause, no matter what it is, that separates man and woman, every interest that divides them does not make for the best good of any nation. Has not this curse been most deeply demonstrated where men have been divided from the community for military purposes? Around the soldier's camp there has always been the greatest amount of evil and temptation, and the best hope that has come to the last years of this dying century is the message of peace that seems to us as a herald of a better day. Nothing will do more to break down the power of war than the influence of woman, who necessarily must be opposed to all that endangers the lives of those she loves; and I believe that when the age comes, in which a woman can say, "I am part of the State, I am a part of the industrial evolution, I am a part of everything that a man values, I think his thoughts with him, I can follow him in lines of philosophy or philanthropy or history or science," then will come that better union which alone can bring mutual happiness and self-respect. The Arabs used to say of a good man that "he is a brother of girls," and I would never speak upon the question of woman's responsibilities or woman's rights without recognising how much man has done to open the great doors of the future to the ideals to which we are looking.

But it is impossible for me to close these words without admitting that I do not wonder that sometimes there is hesitation in the minds of the best, as to the expediency of pressing forward. If I believed that the admittance of women to wider responsibility was likely to endanger the most sacred ties of life, instead of promoting a truer understanding of their value, I too should hesitate; for I believe that no one can with impunity lay a finger on the ark of the solemn mysteries of life, which are ordained by God Himself; and when I hear proposals that these sacred ties should be bartered for financial remuneration, and schemes by which mothers are to be merely recognised agents for replenishing a country's population, then I feel that woman herself has built up the highest barrier to her own interest.

I do not say I believe that there cannot be a wider and a

better understanding of the mutual responsibilities of marriage, and the mutual duties involved in the tie, that the best chances of happiness must be the cultivation of the best in each, so that each may help in the development of the other; but I maintain the profoundest conviction that the ideal of marriage must be preserved, that it must be guarded as a sacred institution, grounded on the truth of the divine nature that is in every human being as the absolute principle upon which the whole ethical character of family life rests. "Marriage," says Hegel, "is essentially a spiritual relation," and if we are going to attempt to treat it as a mere contract, as something that relates only to the interest of property or to the furtherance of individual opportunity, the result will be the utter destruction of social life and disaster to the community. I am well aware that on the individual may sometimes heavily fall the penalty of these principles, but none the less, they are ordained by God Himself, and on them He has founded the whole up-building of our family life.

I recognise in standing here to-day, that I have round me some of the keenest intellects, the best-balanced brains, and the hardest workers among women from all lands. I understand, in part, the immense amount of work for humanity that has been accomplished by them; but yet I should be false to all that I hold dearest, to the principles that are nearest to my heart, if I did not say quite plainly that from my soul I deplore that women are often silent now to-day, from a mistaken liberality, which is, I feel, but faithlessness to the cause of Christ; for I realise, perhaps more deeply than ever, that woman's strongest influence lies in the fact that she must be loyal to the Christianity which has been from its outset a "woman movement," and here quite briefly I would like to ask you to look back a moment and consider whether it is not Christ who uprooted the social system of paganism, and whether He did not recognise man and woman on equal terms?

Plutarch represented advanced thought among the Greeks; but as to the rights of a wife, he said, "A wife shall have no friends but those of her husband, and as the gods are the first of friends, she should have no gods but those whom her husband adored." And it was an old Stoic who laid down the proposition that woman "in every kind of affairs and obligations, whether in behalf of men or women, is prohibited from having any concern." It was upon this social foundation that the reform was begun by the Lord, and it is owing to His teaching that Society now recognises the right of a wife, repudiates free marriages terminating at will (which were common among the Romans). For however much the Church may have been held back by the trammels of superstition, wherever the Gospel has been purest, wherever Christ's golden rule has been best

understood, the progress of religious sentiment has continually tended towards the assertion of the independence of woman. Lecky, in speaking of Christianity has well said, that "in no other important movement of thought was female influence so powerful or so acknowledged."

There comes to me a deeper sense of responsibility as I realise that I stand here to-day in the place of one who did the widest and greatest work for woman's welfare in this generation. I do not even except the veteran whom we honour here to-night, Susan B. Anthony, for Frances Willard brought to the heart and conscience of woman as none other has, her deep responsibility to the world around her, and the intimate relations between the home and that larger home circle which we call Government. Her voice is silent here to-day, for she has been called to wider spheres of work. And there comes to me also the responsibility of knowing that the messages I can give to such gatherings as these will grow fewer. Thank God there are others to take our places abler and better; but with the years also, there comes to me I think a deeper understanding of woman's high and holy calling. I realise how the solemn vicissitudes of her life have helped to confirm her faith in the beautiful realities of the Unseen: how in the hours of pain and danger, when her steps lie along the borderland of this closely-curtained world, the gift she brings is the more sacred because it comes to her when the veil was thin between her and eternity: that the little life that lay in her arms has done more than all theories and arguments to keep hearts loving and unworldly, true to the interest of the race; that in these deepest and most sacred experiences lie the safeguard of our social life. I do not dread the future, for that anchor holds. As Christian women, we need not fear, but go forward with loyal trust to claim all the responsibility that God has for us. The happy, protected lives will give of the abundance of their joyful knowledge to enrich the world; the sad and lonely will use their sorrowful experience to bless others, and so shall be themselves enriched.

And to me this question of women's privileges and rights and responsibilities is part of a better understanding of the law of love each to each, given to the world by His lips Whose Gospel has lifted us up into these heavenly places, Who was a Brother to the Marys, and Who in His hour of mortal agony did not forget His mother, for it is a Hand pierced by the sorrows and sins of the world that points the way.

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, BT., M.P., moved a vote of thanks to Mrs. Fawcett for presiding, which was seconded by SIR WILFRED LAWSON, BT., M.P. Mrs. Fawcett briefly responded, and the meeting closed by singing a verse of "God Save the Queen."

LONDON
WOMEN'S PRINTING SOCIETY, LIMITED.
Whitcomb Street W.C.

6152 66577 (15) ✓

(NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.)

Central and East of England Society for
Women's Suffrage.

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REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

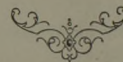
PRESENTED AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN THE

WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL,

July 21st, 1899.



London:

PRINTED BY VACHER & SONS,

MILLBANK STREET, WESTMINSTER.

1899.